

Ratiocinium Vernaculum:

OR, A

R E P L Y

TO

Ataxiæ Obstaculum.

Being

A pretended ANSWER

To certain

Q U E R I E S,

Dispersed in some parts of

Gloucester-shire.

Overbury

*Give unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsars;
and unto God, the things that are Gods,
Mark 12. 17.*

*For so is the will of God, that with well do-
ing, ye may put to silence the Ignorance
of Foolish men, 1 Pet. 2. 15.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for A. B. MDCLXXVIII:



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THE PREFACE

IT is now near Seven years since the *Ensuing Queries*, (grounded, most of them, on *Holy Writ*, or on the *Writings of Learned and Judicious men of the Church of England*) were one Morning cursorily written: Upon the sight of certain *Queries* that had been delivered to, and answer'd by a neighbour Minister; and to him only privately sent, without the least Design or Intention, of their ever being made publick; but to Convince him, (with such others of his Judgement, to whom he should think good to communicate them) of the unreasonableness, especially on Protestant Principles, of exercising Force and Compulsion in Religion, with the danger of Persecuting any on the account thereof. But no answer by him was ever return'd unto their Author, who so little concern'd himself in them; that they were as

The Preface.

much out of his thoughts, as if they had never been written by him: When about Michaelmas 1676. he was surprised with the news of a weak and unadvised Parson's having taken them up into the Pulpit with him, and there made them the Subject of his Mornings Exercise, to the Amazement of some, and Derision of other of his Parishoners; who had never before heard of them, and then understood not his Descant on them. But the noise hereof, soon made them, which for some years had been buryed in silence, now the Discourse of the Country; and they were not only oppugn'd from the Press, the Pulpit, and the Pens of divers Adversaries, but their Author Prosecuted at the Assizes as Criminal; though 'twill, perhaps, be difficult, shewing as they were written, and disposed of by him, what Law of God or Man, he therein Transgress'd; or what Civil or Religious Interest was thereby injur'd; since upon the severest Examination and Scrutiny, they will be found to have no worse aim or design, than to manifest how Irrational it was, and how Ineffectual it must needs be, to all good purposes (as well as inconsistent with the
Pre-

The Preface.

Precepts of the Gospel, and Principles of Christianity) to Force Religion; and how dangerous to Prosecute any on the account thereof: And herein he is satisfied to have the Concurrent opinion of the most Learned and Judicious Divines of all Parties; though the Practices of too many of them, have not been answerable thereunto; who, indeed, say and do not: Nay may be said, some of them to make themselves Transgressors, in building again the things which they destroyed. And though 'twould not be difficult to Compose a Volume, in but Transcribing what they have Written to this purpose: I shall here content my self with a single Citation; yet it being from one, who having had the Approbation and Applause of the Famousst University of Christendom, as well as of the Generality of Learned and Judicious Men of the Reformation, may pass for more then a single Testimony; and this is the Eminently Learned and Acute Mr. Chillingworth, who in his Treatise, Entituled, the Religion of Protestants, a safe way to Salvation; thus speaks: I have learnt, saith he, from the Ancient Fathers of the Church; that no-

Gal. 2. 18.

Chap. 5 §.
96. p. 265.
Imp. 3.

thing

The Preface.

thing is more against Religion, then to Force Religion: And of St. Paul, *The Weapons of the Christian Warfare are not Carnal*: And great Reason, for humane Violence may make men Counterfeit, but cannot make them Believe; and is therefore fit for nothing, but to breed Form without, and Atheisme within. Besides, *saith he*, if this means of bringing men to embrace any Religion were generally used, (as if it may be justly used in any place, by those that have Power, and think they have Truth: Certainly they cannot with Reason deny, but that it may be used in every place, by those that have Power as well as they, and think they have Truth as well as they,) what could follow but the maintenance, perhaps of Truth; but perhaps, only of the Profession of it in one place, and the Oppression of it in an hundred? What will follow from it, but the preservation, peradventure of Unity; but peradventure only of Uniformity in particular States and Churches, but the Immortalizing the greater and more lamentable Divisions of Christendom and the World? And therefore
what

The Preface.

what can follow from it, but perhaps, in the Judgment of Carnal Policy, the Temporal benefit and Tranquillity of Temporal States and Kingdoms; but the Infinite Prejudice, if not the Desolation of the Kingdom of Christ? And therefore it well becomes them who have their Portions in this life, who serve no higher State, then this of *England* or *Spain*, or *France*; nor this neither, any further than they serve themselves by it: Who think of no other Happiness, but the Preservation of their own Fortunes, and Tranquillity in this world; who think of no other means to preserve Estates but Humane Power, and *Machivellian* Policy; and believe no other Creed but this, *Regi aut Civitati imperium habenti nihil injustum quod utile*. Such men as these, it may well become to maintain by worldly Power and Violence, their State-Instrument, Religion: For if all be vain and false, (as in their Judgment it is) the present whatsoever, is better then any, because it is already Settled; an alteration of it, may draw with it change of States; and the change of State the Subversion of their Fortune.

But

The Preface.

But they that are indeed Servants and Lovers of Christ, of Truth, of the Church; and of Mankind; ought with all courage to oppose themselves against it, as a Common enemy of all these. They that know there is a King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whose will and pleasure King and Kingdoms stand and fall; they know that to no King or State, any thing can be profitable, which is unjust; and that nothing can be more evidently unjust, then to force weak men, by the Profession of a Religion which they believe not; to loose their own Eternal Happiness, out of a vain and needless fear, least they may possibly disturb their Temporal quietness: There being no danger to any State from any mans Opinion, unless it be such an Opinion of which Disobedience to Authority, or Impiety is taught or Licenc'd; which sort, I confess, may justly be punisht as well as other Faults; or, unless this Sanguinary Doctrine be joynd with it; that it is lawful for him by humane violence to enforce others to it.

This

The Preface.

This was the Judgment of this Learned and Judicious Divine of the Church of England, concerning Force in Religion; and of those Doubtless, who Licens'd and Approv'd of this his Learned and Judicious Treatise; in which they unanimously declare, to find nothing contrary to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England: So that it is not the Church of England, that approves or allows of Force in Religion, or that Carnal weapons are to be used in the Christian warfare; but such of her Degenerate and Base Sons only, as forsake the Law of their Mother. For, as he hath well observ'd Humane Violence may make men Counterfeit, but cannot make them Believe; and is therefore fit for nothing, but to breed Form without, and Aethism within; which should make it to be abhorr'd and detested by all sincere and good Christians. And surely the Church of England, who decries, and so highly condemnes blind Obedience in the Duties of Religion, can never Approve or Allow of Forceing any therein against their Light and Judgments: which is, certainly, the worst of blind Obediences: For, since Whatever is

The Preface.

not of Faith, is *sin*; *Whatever a man does against his Faith, or Conscience, must needs be much more so.*

And as the Church of England, neither Approves, nor Allows of Secular Force and Compulsion in Religion; and much less that any should be therein required to do ought against their Light or Judgments, which were to sin against their Consciences: So she as little Allows or Approves of Persecuting, or any wayes Molesting or Troubling any for the real performance of any truly Christian Exercise of Religion. Nor, I dare presume to say, does any Law of England Allow or Countenance, much less Command, or Require any such thing; though too many have Misconstru'd and Misapply'd the late Act for Preventing and Supressing Seditious Conventicles, to the Disturbing and Punishing, I may say Ruining of many Peaceable and Pious people, for Meeting only, really and truly to Worship and serve God: For the Act does not say, if any person or persons above such a number, shall meet to Worship God truly and sincerely, in other manner than according to the Liturgy, &c. They shall incurre the Penalty mention'd: But where

The Preface.

where any Person, &c. shall be present at any Meeting, under Colour or Pretence of any Exercise of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England, &c. It shall and may be Lawful, &c. *The Act certainly, does not prohibit or punish any real and truly Christian Exercise of Religion; for if it did, it were, Ipso Facto, null and void, as being against the Law of God. But if it be objected, it appears not whether their Worship be Sincere or Pretended only; and the Law prohibits such a number to meet, under any colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion, in other manner then according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England; and punishes those that transgress the same: 'Tis answer'd, that all Pretences ought in Charity to be believ'd, where no Over-act discovers the Hypocrisie or falsehood of the mind: But since there is so little Charity amongst men; let it be shown wherein the Exercises of Religion, which some have been pleased to punish by vertue, or colour rather, of that Law; were in other manner than, according to the Liturgy and Practice of*
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The Preface.

the Church of England. If it be said they ought to be perform'd in the very words of the Liturgy; it is more than the Aēt sayes: And the Practice of the Church of England, has ever allowed men to pray, even in Publick, in other words than are prescribed in the Liturgy. Our Blessed Saviour teaching his Disciples to pray, said unto them; After this manner, therefore pray ye; Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. And yet we do not find in Scripture, (where their Prayers are often Recorded) that they ever prayed by that Form, but in other words, agreeing for matter, and yet they were accepted. There are none therefore, I hope, will say, they disobeyed their Lord and Master, by praying in other manner than he taught, and commanded them, because they prayed not by that Form: No more do they transgress the Law against praying in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England, who pray not by the words of the Liturgy while they pray in other words agreeing with it for matter. What pretence then, can any have to Charge the Author of these Queries with Libelling the Church and

Mat. 6. 9.

Acts 1. 14.

4. 24, &c.

Rom. 1. 9.

10. 1.

Eph. 1. 16,

&c.

1 Thess. 1.

2, 3, 10.

Phil. 4.

The Preface.

and State; since they reflect on neither, nor Censure, or by any undue surmises, condemn ought that they approve or allow of? Nay, is it not unreasonable to account that a Crime in any one, which is the duty of every one, viz. To endeavour, by all lawfull wayes and means, that all that would, might lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty; which they can never do, who are forced to Profess, what they believe not; and in the duties of Religion, to practice what they approve not, which is to live in a perpetual lye. The question here is not, whether what is required of any, be in it self sinful or unlawful; but whether they who judge it so, be it through Ignorance, or otherwise, can without sinning, conform to it? There is no doubt and question, but that many may, and do, live Godly, Holily and Righteously, in the Exercise of that Religion, which to others, would be Damnable; for to him who esteemeth a thing unclean, to him it is so; though in it self, it may be pure: So he that doubteth is damned if he eat; while others perswaded of the lawfulness thereof may safely use their Liberty. Pleading therefore against Force
in

'The Preface.

in Religion; we neither condemn nor censure this or that Religion, which teaches not that Sanguinary Doctrine; but would that every one should be fully perswaded in his own mind, the Religion he Embraceth and Professeth, is what God wills and requires of him; since whatever is not of Faith is sin, and Faith in all things respects the Commands and Authority of God.

Isa. 29. 13.
Safe way
to Salv. p.
187.

It were, indeed, heartily to be wisht, that all were of a mind, as to the due performance of this great and indispensable duty, the Worship of God: But this is rather to be wisht, then hoped for, while there are men truly fearing God; and those whose fear of him, is taught by the Precept of men. There are, (saith our Lerrned and Judicious Mr. Chillingworth,) But two wayes that may be conceived probable to reduce Christians to unity of Communion: The one, by taking away diversity of Opinions touching matters of Religion; the other, by shewing that the diversity of Opinions which is among the several Sects of Christians, ought to be no hindrance to their unity in Communion.

Now

The Preface.

Now the former of these, *saith he*, is not to be hoped for without a Miracle ; unless it could be made evident to all men , that God hath appointed some visible Judge of Controversies, to whose Judgment all men are to submit themselves. What then remains, but that the other way must be taken ; and Christians must be taught to set a higher value upon these high points of Faith and Obedience wherein they agree, than upon those matters of less moment wherein they differ ; and understand that agreement in those ought to be more effectual to joyn them in one Communion ; I mean, *saith he* , In a common profession of those Articles of Faith , wherein all Consent : A joynt Worship of God after such a way, as all esteem lawful : And a Mutual performance of all those works of Charity, which Christians owe one to another. *But whilst every one hath a Confession, a Form of Worship, a Church and its Authority, which must be imposed on all others, we may look and wish for Peace, Moderation and Unity, but are never like to meet with them on these Terms.*

Those

The Preface.

Those whom Experience will not convince of the vanity, of endeavouring to bring Christians to Unity of Communion, by Secular Force or Compulsion; and of the great Miseries, Persecutions and Sufferings, such Methods have in all Ages brought upon the Churches and People of God; with the little, or no, advantage that at any time hath thereby accrued to Religion; will never be Convinced thereof by the clearest Evidences, or Demonstrations, of Reason. And though it cannot be denyed, but that there have been, and still are, many good and holy men, who contend earnestly for Secular Force and Compulsion in Religion; yet it must withall be said, 'tis a preposterous and blind zeal in them, to endeavour to promote the Truth of the Gospel, contrary to the Laws of the Gospel. But for the generality of its Advocats, nothing is more evident, then that it is not for the Interest of Religion; but for some Carnal Interest or Secular advantage, they receive by it.

'Tis strange that any not wholly ignorant of the State of Christendom, or most Christian States; not to speak of the Civil Powers, in other parts of the World; should

The Preface.

Should think that the Exercise of Secular Force or Compulsion in Religion, can be for the Interest of the Truth, when the Generality of them are Ignorant of it, if not enemies to it. But we are told, where the Truth is once own'd and profess'd, every Error and Heresy that riseth up against it, ought to be Suppress'd and Extirpated by the Civil Sword. Will these men then tell us, what Sect or Society, not of Christians only, but of Jews, Turks or Heathens, believe not themselves alone possess'd of the Truth? So that this Method of preserving and propagating Religion, prevailing (as it doth too much through the Power and Influence of the God of this World, whose Kingdom of darkness could not otherwise long stand against the light and power of Truth.) What, I say, doth or can follow upon it; but perhaps the Profession of Truth in one place, and the Oppression of it in an hundred. Do not they who deny unto such as Dissent from the Religion Establish'd here, the Exercise of their Religion; upon the same ground, deny it also to all the Reformed Churches, in all Popish Countrys of Europe? To talk of Truth and Error here is Ridiculous: For, as

The Preface.

we were but now told, If Force in Religion may be justly used in any place by those that have Power, and think they have Truth; it cannot with reason be denyed; but that it may be used in every place, by those who have Power as well as they, and think they have Truth too, as well as they. But were the same mind in us, that was in our Lord and Master Christ Jesus; the same frame of Spirit, that was in his Blessed Apostles; we would do to others, as we would be done unto; and not mete unto any, what we would not should be meted unto us again. But whilst some men make their Judgments or Opinions, the Rule or Standard of Truth and Error; forcing others to embrace, or renounce that as such, which they shall so call or judge; whatever it appears to them by the Rule, whereby they are commanded to try and prove it; what Truth or Peace can from thence be expected, or hoped for? Well therefore might the Judicious Mr. Chillingworth, cry out, Let those leave claiming Infallibility, that have no Title to it; and let those that in their Words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their Actions:

The Preface.

them, under pretence of Religion; nor yet a Liberty for any to Preach or Teach Doctrines Destructive or Prejudicial to the Peace and Quiet of Civil Societies; but a Liberty of Worship only, under the Magistrates inspection: And that such a Liberty is the Natural and Common Right of all Nations and Persons, hath been so fully prov'd by many Eminent and Learned men, even of the Church of England; and particularly by the Reverend and Learned Dr. Jeremy Taylor, (late Bishop of Downe and Conough) in his Discourse of the Liberty of Prophefying, it would be but, Actum agere, to say more. And it argues great Ignorance or Impudence in those who persist Declaiming against Liberty of Religion, without offering at the least answer to what hath been said for it, by this and other Learned and Judicious Divines of the Church of England, as well as by most of the Ancient and Orthodox Fathers of the Church.

As for that other Objection against Liberty of Religion, that it will cause Disturbance in the State: It is not only

The Preface.

only against Reason, but the Experience of all Ages and Places; no Instance being to be given that ever Liberty of Religion gave Disturbance to any Civil State: But the contrary, the denying Christians their just Liberty therein, hath been the unhappy occasion of the greatest Troubles, Miseries, and Desolations, that have befallen most of the States and Commonwealths of Christendom.

But to conclude this Point; The Liberty pleaded for, is no more, in Substance, then what by His Majesties late Declaration of Indulgence to Dissenters, was Allowed and Approved of by him, a much better and Competenter Judge of what is for the Nations Peace and Interest, then they who object this: Nor was the Parliaments Exception to the Indulgence granted, but the manner of granting it; which they judg'd might be of ill and dangerous Consequence: It is therefore to be hoped, they will, in due time take it into Consideration, and make such provision for the preventing and punishing Seditious Conventicles, as wicked and ungodly men may not take occasion from, to Molest and Disturb the Assemblies

The Preface.

Assemblies of Peaceable and Pious People, for the performance only of the Worship and Service of God, in such a way as none can, (with reason,) say to be against the Rule and Order of the Gospel; much less to be guilty of any Moral Evil or Impiety; That the Word of the Lord may have a free Course, and his Name be Glorified in the midst of us.

The Answer to the Answerers Preface.

IT will, I doubt not, be equally difficult for this Answerer to shew, what Truth he hath Vindicated; as what Truth these *Queries* oppose. How far any have been satisfied with his performances, is best known unto themselves: But how little he hath Complied with the Gentlemans desire, in returning a Candid and Christian Resolution to them

The Preface.

them, is left to the Judgment of every Judicious and Intelligent Reader.

Had he not himself told us, he had Review'd what he had written; the gross oversights he hath been guilty of, might have been imputed to his too hasty Pen; which he now gives us to understand, are the effects of something else.

Had he convinc'd us of any mistakes or Aberrations, we might have been guilty of; we should have thank'd him for the Discovery: But, as yet, we cannot own the least Obligation to him on that account.

The *Queries*, he acknowledgeth here, afford variety of matter for the Exercise of any Learned Pen, (they had not else, been worthy his Consideration) and yet in his Title Page, they were to be avoided, as Foolish and Unlearned Questions. But more of this anon.

His Reader, I am perswaded, is no less to seek for those old Truths, Vindicated with old Arguments, which he promises him: Than for those new Notions and Discoveries, he bids him not to expect from him.

The Preface.

It were, indeed, as he says, somewhat strange, that Dissenters should use the same methods to unsettle and pervert people, in the unerrable esteem they ought to have of the Church and their Superiours; which the Popish Emissaries do with those Persons they intend to Proselyte to their Abominable Religion: But it is not at all strange he should tell us so, without giving us one Instance thereof.

'Tis observable, he says, The very first Stratagem the Devil used to ruine Mankind, was to propose a Query to our first Parents: But had he been as well acquainted with our Blessed Saviour, and his Actions; as he appears to have been Conversant with the Devil, and his doings: He might likewise have observ'd, it was by a Query also, that he Confounded and silenc'd, his malicious and ensnaring Adversaries; who wanted his skill or cunning, to answer from the Question, or to tell him; There were very great mistakes, or it had many things questionable in it. And it was by Queries also, that he Convinc'd the Scribes and Pharisees; (those blind guides,) of their Errors. And

Mat. 27.
25. See
Ans. to the
21. and 27.
Quer.
Mat. 23.

The Preface.

when ever this Answerer, instead of his Circumlocutions, shall vouchsafe a Categorical answer to these *Queries*; they may possibly convince him also, of (what perhaps, he would not be convinc'd of, *least he should see no fruit of the Travel of his Soul*) the unreasonableness of using Secular Force and Compulsion in Religion; without the least danger of shaking either his Faith, Hope, or Peace; unless resolv'd to act against his Conscience; which, if not fear'd, might indeed, give him disquiet.

If Queries and scruples in matters of Religion, were (as he affirms) certain signs, either of a weak and Childish, or of a Cavilling and Froward Judgment; we had never, certainly, been commanded, to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling. Nor had the Bereans been commanded for searching the Scriptures, after the Preaching even of Paul himself, whether those things were so. But we cannot deny, he may have reason to say, some men are Novices in knowledge, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth: And for such as hold it in unrighteousness, it must one day be accounted for.

But

*the 24.
Qu.*

Phil. 2. 12.

Acts 17.

The Preface.

But with what forehead, can this Answerer here charge us with studying to be Sceptical; and with divulging these Queries, to deceive the Hearts of the simple, and overthrow the Faith of weak Christians? Or with what Conscience can he say, *They are propounded with Superciliousness, Insolence, and Violence, &c.* When in the Judgment of all unbyass'd Persons; they could not well have been propounded, with greater Candor, Sobriety and Meekness: But what will not a kown and Infamous, and Impudent Libeller dare to say, even against Conscience; and the clearest Evidences of Sense and Reason?

Though we are given to understand, *That which was chiefly design'd in the Answer, as he calls it, to these Queries: Was first, to remove those false pretences of Conscience men make in matters of Religion; and then to endeavour the defence of the Magistrates power therein:* We are yet as far to seek wherein he hath remov'd the one; as what cause hath by these Queries been given him, to endeavour the defence of the other.

No-

The Preface.

Nothing is more certain, than that it would greatly contribute to the Happiness of this Nation: *To break off our sins by Righteousness; and, laying aside all petty Differences and Animosities, to unite our selves against the common enemy of Protestantism;* But this is not to be expected from those, who while they declaim against Popery; uphold and support it in their Principles and Practices.

'Tis very strange, he tells us, the Jesuited Priests should have the luck for so many years to escape the lash of all the Penal Laws, and not one of them be made an example of Justice. But 'tis yet more strange, an Impudent Libeller should be Licens'd to reflect thus upon the Government.

The Papists, he says, of late years, are very zealous for Liberty of Conscience; And who, that has a Conscience, is not so? But this, let me assure him, is no Popish Tenent; nor are they the more to be trusted for it, than he for his declaiming against Popery.

This

The Preface.

The Vigorous Execution of one Law,
would, he sayes, do more good than a
Million of Proclamations: But their
Force is Rescinded; their Course Ob-
structed; and their Penalties Pardon-
ed: And by whom all this? 'Tis not
therefore these *Queries*, but this An-
swerer, that Reflects on the Govern-
ment, Libells the State, and speaks
evil of things he understands not:
As, God willing, shall be further Evi-
denc'd in what follows:

ERRA-

ERRATA.

Page 1. l. 5. r. Answerer, p. 2 l. 19. r. Answerer,
 l. 23. r. word, p. 3. l. 17. r. man, p. 5. l. 29. r.
 Immortalities, p. 6. l. 19. r. unto Satan, p. 7. l. 16.
 r. intended by, p. 10. l. 17. r. Congregations, p. 13.
 l. 5. for or r. a, l. 10. dele to, l. 19. for in r. is. l.
 23. r. unitate, l. 26. r. unitatis, l. 26, and 27. r.
 Scripta, p. 21. r. It will I, p. 24. l. 25. r. Seneca,
 p. 25. l. 10. r. Mysteries, p. 26. l. 9. r. In Nations,
 l. ult. dele a, a. p. 27. l. 10. dele it, p. 29. l. 13. for
 theerr. his, l. 19. r. acknowledged, p. 31. l. 21. r.
 work, p. 34. l. 5. r. unto, l. 27. r. bear, p. 35. l. 11.
 r. Imperatorie, p. 53. l. 14. r. the Saints. p. 62. l. 25.
 r. Ames, p. 72. l. 1. r. teneatis, p. 85. l. 18. r. be forced
 in, p. 87. l. 26. r. by an, l. ult. for our, r. one, p. 88.
 l. 2. r. proceed. p. 89. l. 16. r. blinder, p. 90. l. 12.
 r. impra, p. 91. l. 6. r. on the, p. 97. l. 1. r. bath, p.
 100. l. 21. r. first Ref. l. 25. r. it, l. 27. r. for as, p.
 105. l. for Just. r. Jurisdiction, p. 108. l. 6. dele at,
 l. 28. r. on each other, p. 109. l. 6. r. alike, a Leiente-
 nant, l. 6, 7. r. Vicar General, l. 9. r. yet (he is, p. 112.
 l. 7. r. are of, p. 114. l. 30. r. endued, p. 116. l. 27.
 r. hers, p. 117. l. 9. r. and Superstition, p. 118. l. 6. r. says,
 p. 125. l. r. Churches obedience, p. 127. l. 9. r. in no
 wise. p. 132. l. 31. for Kings r. Kindes, p. 133. l. 7.
 r. aide, p. 135. l. 10. r. Nursing, p. 136. l. 18. r. And
 so, p. 138. l. 3. r. Mahumatism, l. 15. r. of others, l. 16.
 r. i. e. such, p. 140. 25, 26. r. gaudentem, p. 142. l.
 10. r. neatly, p. 144. l. 17. r. their duty, p. 151. l. 6. r.
 Authors, l. 14. r. Murther, p. 153. after l. 26. r. with
 a designe and purpose to ensnare the Consciences of In-
 ferious; much less shall we take upon us to determine,
 what humane Laws thwart, &c. p. 155. l. 10, 11.
 r. Instructions, l. 14. r. the Kings, p. 156. l. 21. r.
 these, p. 161. l. 21. r. endear his, l. 26. r. passed a, p.
 166. l. 9, 10. r. Superstitions.

Query I.

Whether hath Christ Instituted a Gospel Church?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

CAvils at expressions, tending only to an unprofitable strife of words, ought no less to be avoided, then foolish and unlearned Questions; This Answer^{er} therefore, who so early, as in his Title Page, caution'd his Reader against the one, should not himself have so soon obtruded on him the other

What Prerogative preceeding Ages had above the present, to Coyn Phrases in Divinity, we should be glad to be informed; Or if no expression may be therein us'd, we meet not with in the New-Testament; we may no longer use Sacrament, nor Trinity, which are not to be there found: And yet a Church constituted and Goveru'd according to the Rule of the Gospel; may as properly be term'd a Gospel-Church: as a Church Constituted and Govern'd according to the Laws of a Nation, be term'd a National Church; an expression frequently us'd by this Answerer, though he meet not with it in the New-Testament; Nor, possibly in Antiquity, at least to express a Christian Church. But having given us the Queries meaning in his own words; he acknowledges that Christ hath Instituted such a Church.

B

Query II.

Query II.

What is an Instituted Church of the Gospel? and by what means do Persons become a Church of Christ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

AS in all Disputations, 'tis necessary the Terms be agreed upon; so here, what is meant by Church, which in Scripture hath divers acceptations; for by Church there, is sometimes understood the Elect only, or mystical Body of Christ; by some called the Holy Catholick Church. Sometimes again the universality of the Professors of Christianity, commonly called the Church Catholick visible: And sometimes by Church, is meant only a particular Church, or Society of Christians united for the performance of the worship of God in the same individual Ordinances, according to the Order by Christ prescrib'd. Such was the Church at *Corinth*; the Church at *Jerusalem*; the Church at *Antioch*; the Seven Churches in *Asia*; and divers others mentioned in the New-Testament; and is the Church here inquired after: To which this Answer, in saying, *The Church, or the Christian Church, is God's Family, or Household, &c.* answers not, the Question not being concerning the Church in the 1st. or 2^d. acceptation of the word. But had he said, An Instituted Church of the Gospel; or as he expresses it, *A Church Constituted and Govern'd according*

ing to the Rules of the Gospel, is a Society of men joyned together in the Profession of the Christian Faith, having right Pastors or Officers, invested with Power to Guide and Govern them in the ways of God; and to dispence unto them the Ordinances of the Gospel, (which none but a Church in the third acceptation of the word hath,) it might have past for an answer to the Query, though not so full and clear a one, as might have been given.

But whereas he says, *He hopes, there may be as well such a National Church in England, as there was for above fifteen hundred years in Palestine among the Jews.* If by such a National Church, he means only, a Church having National Church-Officers over it, (as had the Church of the Jews) no man sure doubts it; But if by such a National Church, he means a National Church of Divine Institution; we see not whereon he grounds his hopes, since it hath not pleased God to Institute, or appoint any such National Church under the Gospel; Nor does the Church of England pretend to any such original, as is evident by the Statute of the 25th of Edward the 3d. *Where it is de-* Statute of Provisors of Benefices. *clared to be founded in Prelacy, by the Kings and Nobles of England; without the least pretence to a Divine Institution, as had the National Church of the Jews.*

There is no doubt but that Christ, as he says, would have his *Church Catholick, as well as Holy*; yet not always so *Illustrious or visible*, as to be seen and owned by the world. And

though *whole Nations were to embrace the Christian Faith, and upon that account to Constitute the Christian Church, or Catholick Church visible*; yet that doth not Constitute them *National Churches*; such as was the Church of the Jews; nor can they be so called, upon the same account that a particular Church is called a Church. And *when Christ threatned the Jews to take the Kingdom of God from them, and give it unto a Nation that should bring forth the Fruits of it*; he meant, no doubt, as he says, *more by a Nation, then one particular Church*; for he meant a Nation (or People) that might have many particular Churches, or Congregations of Christians in it, but did not thereby Constitute, or intend a National Church in his notion. Neither yet did he confine the Christian Church to a Nation; and consequently not *within smaller bounds then the Jewish was, when empal'd within the Land of Canaan*. But how will this Answerer prove it to have been as he says, *far from the mind of our Redeemer to crumble his Church, (as he words it) into such minute and little Principles of being, (as Congregational Churches,)* when the Scriptures give so great evidence to the contrary; there being indeed no other Instituted Church, under the Gospel, then what is Congregational. And when our Blessed Saviour Instituted those, he commanded certainly, *the Demolishing an Established National Church*, even the National Church of the Jews; the only National Church in the world of Gods Institution.

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The second part of this Query, does evidently enough intend a particular Church, as before exprest, which 'tis not impossible but five or six Persons may Constitute, notwithstanding his peremptory denial thereof: Christ himself having told us; *Where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midst of them*; which is the ground or principle of all Instituted Churches: and we read of the Church in the House of Aquila and Priscilla; which cannot reasonably be supposed to consist of any great number. 1 Cor. 16. 19.

By what means Persons become a Church of Christ; *And how particular Persons become Members of the Church of Christ*; are two different Questions: and even this, which is his own, he answers not distinctly; for by his first way, They become Members only of the Catholick Church visible; By his second, They become Members also of the Holy Catholick Church, the mystical Body of Christ: so that without distinguishing what is here and there meant by Church; we are not like to be much edified by this Answerer.

That a *visible Profession of Christianity, Entitles men to the Priviledges of the Church*, in the second acceptation of the word, may be true; which yet, with his good leave, their Debaucheries and Immoralities may again deprive them of, notwithstanding the Church at Corinth's delay in casting out the incestuous person. But 'tis not every vice or error in a Member of a particular Church, that Unchurches them.

St.

Matt. 13.
38.

St. Paul therefore might very well own the Church at *Corinth* for a Church ; notwithstanding the Debaucheries and Immoralities that were in some of its Members. But the tolerating them, was certainly a Crime, which the Parable of the Tares and Wheat will never justify : for though they were *to grow together till Harvest*, it was not in the Church, but in the world ; for so our Saviour declares the field to be. Nor will the parable of the Net, and good and bad Fishes contained therein, give any more countenance to this fond Assertion ; that Debaucheries and Immoralities are , or may be tolerated in a Christian Church : or that Debaucht and Immoral persons, are not to be debarr'd the Priviledges thereof ; If that be, as it seems to be, this Answerers meaning ; the Apostle commanding that the Incestuous person be delivered unto Satan : *i. e.* cast out of the Church, the Kingdom of God, into the world, the Kingdom of the Devil.

Query III.

Whether the Parochial Churches within these Nations, and the worship therein us'd, be according to Christs Institution, or the Rule and Order of the Gospel ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THIS Query, relating to the former, hath respect unto the means whereby Christians become a Church of Christ ; and aim'd at their
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information or satisfaction, who doubted whether Co-habitation, or mens living together within such or such a Precinct; having a Priest or Curate so and so set over them, be the formal cause of an Instituted Church of the Gospel: And whether such Societies, meeting to worship God, by certain set or prescribed Forms of Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, be according to Christs Institution, or the Rule and Order of the Gospel: which this Answerer not thinking good to speak to, *requiring only the contrary to be shewne*, leaves his Reader therein as much unsatisfied, and to seek, as before, while he troubles himself with enumerating such particulars, as are not here questioned, nor were ever intruded by the Query, which respected more the manner, then matter of worship, and formal cause only of an Instituted Church of the Gospel.

Query I V.

Whether it be not the duty of every Christian, to withdraw from every Brother that walks disorderly; and not after the Traditions received from the Apostles?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

WE have an affirmative answer here, which could not well be denied us; since it is but what the Apostle commands. But then he tells us *from an excellent Expositor*, what disorderly walking is; by which it

It seems, we are only to withdraw from such as withdraw their Obedience from the Church; and like disbanded Souldiers run away from their Colours, (where, by the way, disbanded Souldiers are improperly said to run away,) forsake the Service of their Superiours, and Commands of their Bishops, &c. and with such, he tells us, we are not to have any familiar or friendly conversation: But this withdrawing, says he, concerns only private Persons; and yet private Persons are not totally to withdraw themselves from such disorderly walkers, till so and so; nay, even then we are not interdicted all Society with such a Person: So that we are little edified by this Answerer, or his excellent Expositor, as to our duty of withdrawing; which they do not convince us, ought to be only from the civil conversation, of such as withdraw their obedience from the Church; or as forsake the service of their Superiours; and commands of their Bishops; and not also from the Religious Fellowship and Communion of such Bishops and Brethren, as in the Worship and Service of God, walk not according to the Rule and Order of the Gospel.

QUERY

Query V.

Whether it be not the duty of every Christian to chuse the Communion of the purest Church? And whether in the choice thereof, is he bound to follow his own Judgement, after the best information he is able to attain unto, or other mens Judgements against his own?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

Little of what hath been here said, is to the matter in Question; though in a peevish and froward manner, he tells us, *If there be a purer Church they may betake themselves to it:* Whereby he seems to acknowledge, That it is every mans duty to chuse the Communion of the purest Church: Nor does he say, that in the choice thereof, a man is bound to follow anothers Judgement against his own; and if he be not, why are any molested for but doing their duty? and though possibly they may be mistaken in their choice; yet while they are so by misfortune, and not their fault; God will pardon it, and men ought not to punish it; at least, while therein, they hurt none but themselves. Yea, but says this Answerer, *They introduce confusion in all the Parishes of this Kingdom; in setting up one Altar against another, and removing ancient Land-marks, expressly against a* Deut. 19. 14. *Divine Prohibition; which is not saith he, to embrace the Communion of the purest Church,*

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but to cast a mans self out of the Catholick Church.

But does this Learned and Judicious Answerer really believe, That they who Separate from a Parochial, or National Church, do thereby cast themselves out of the Catholick Church? Does he believe, the *French* Protestants cast themselves out of the Catholick Church, when they Separated from their Parochial Churches, or from the National Church of *France*? Or that the Parliament went expressly against a Divine Prohibition, in removing an Ancient Land-mark, when they gave new Bounds to *St. Martins* Parish, by taking *Covent-Garden* out of it? And what do they, who in this Nation, worship God in Assemblies, Separate from the Parochial Congregations, more then all the Reformed Churches, in all Popish Conuntries in *Europe*, both do, and have done, ever since they had a Being; and yet, I hope, they set not Altar against Altar: or if they do, let him shew the evil of it.

His objection against *Dissenters* being let alone, or suffer'd to go on in their way; in that it will, as he says, administer occasion to the Enemies of our Religion, to come and take away both our Place, our Church and Nation; is but the old objection the Chief Priests and Phraisees heretofore made against tolerating our Blessed Saviour himself; If say they, *We* let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take, away both our Place and Nation: and I heartily wish, it may not be-

Joh. 11. 48.

befall us, as it did them ; That while they let him not alone, the *Romans* did come, and took away both their Place and Nation.

But what means he, in saying, *A Naional Church is the ground of Unity and Communion amongst the Professors of Christianity* ? which is a Notion, I am sure, he never met with in the New-Testament, nor in Antiquity ; nor yet, I dare say, in any judicious or intelligent Author : Nor is it easie to conceive what he intends by it, or in what sense a National Church can be said to be the ground of Unity and Communion amongst the Professors of Christianity ; who are dispersed over all Nations ; if by it, he means only amongst the Professors of Christianity in a Nation ; it is very impertinent ; for a Diocesan Church, or a Parochial Church, is as much the ground of Unity and Communion, amongst the Professors of Christianity in a Diocess, or in a Parish ; as a National Church amongst the Professors of Christianity in a Nation.

But 'tis impossible, says this Answerer, to obtain this Communion, unless the members of the Church own this principle, viz. That the visible Unity of the Church is necessary for the great ends of Christianity, &c.

But what Church, and what Unity, is here intended ? If a National Church ? Wherein consists its Unity ? It cannot consist in a joynt Assembly for the celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel ; or any one of them, as was the Case of the Church of the Jews,

which met at set times, in one place for the performance of that worship which was then required. If it shall be said, its visible Unity consists in a subordination of Officers in this Church, centring in one: It will be said likewise, and with as good reason, That if such an Unity of a National Church be necessary, for the great ends of Christianity, the preserving and promoting of Peace and Unity; the same Unity of the Catholick Church visible, is no less necessary for the same ends, and so much more desirable, as the Unity of the whole, with the Peace and Piety thereof, is more to be desired, then the Unity, Peace and Piety of a part: and where then shall we end, but in a Pope? This is so obvious to every understanding, that none who plead for the one, can with any colour or shadow of reason reject the other: And if *this Profession*, as this Answerer says, *Obliges all persons to acquiesce in those determinations, by which the Church is visibly upheld and maintained*; It does so no less in respect of the Catholick Church visible, then of a National Church: and why then doth he not acquiesce in the determinations, of the Council of *Ariminum*, against the Diety of our Blessed Saviour; of the Council of *Constance*, in taking the Cup from the People; of the Council of *Nice*, in Decreeing Image-worship; of the Council of *Lateran*, in determining Transubstantiation; with others exercising the like Authority; an acquiescencie therein, being that whereby, in his Judgement, *the Church is visibly*

visibly upheld and maintained: for he cannot, with any colour of reason pretend, greater submission or obedience to be due to the determinations of a National Church in its representative or National Council; then to the determinations of the Catholick Church visible, in its representative, a general Council. Nor, possibly, will he abide by his own principle, of acquiescing in the determinations of a National Church; if he call to mind, or but to inform himself, what a National Church; and even this National Church hath determin'd, within the memory of some not long since living. I mean in Queen *Maries* Reign; or if he should be such a thorow pac't Conformist, all of his Coat will not I am very confident be so. But thus far I agree with him, That to acquiesce in the determinations of any Society, or of the Governours thereof, is a ground of Unity and Peace in that Society; but not always of Truth and Piety, without which, there is little or no advantage in Unity; For, *nihil bonum est in unitate, nisi unitas sit in bono*: Unity in error, being but Conspiracy against Truth: or, as *Hierome* said, speaking of the Council of *Ariminum*, *Nomine unitatis & fidei, infidelitas scripta est*. But I do fully agree with him, *The Society is yet un-named, which did not always justify its own Acts, and oblige those under its Authority, to confirm to its Laws, and Constitutions*; But this is not to our Question, which is not concerning the Authority of the Governours or Rulers of a Society; or the obedience due unto them, from

from the Members, or Subjects of that Society; But whether Christians have not a Right and Liberty to chuse their Communion; or whether it be not their duty to joyn themselves unto such Congregations, in the participation of the Ordinances of the Gospel, as they judge to walk according to the rule of the Gospel; and wherein they may be best edified in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and of their Salvation in and by him; which this Answerer does not deny; neither can it reasonably be denied: For, I presume, none will say, It is every mans duty to be of the Communion of that Church, where providence hath cast his Nativity, or confin'd his abode; Because there born, or abiding: Nor yet, that it is any mans duty to continue in that Church, wherein he hath been educated, if after serious and sober enquiry and Examination, any thing therein injoyn'd or requir'd to be profess'd or done, be judg'd unlawful or unwarrantable by a mans own Conscience. But that every one, who is actually a Member of any Church or Christian Society; ought, while he so continues, to conform to its Laws and Constitutions; none sure will deny: Nor can any hinder or forbid Churches of whatever denomination, to determine the Bounds of their own Communion; and that by such Constitutions and Rights, as they in their wisdoms, shall judge necessary to preserve Order and Unity; and advance the edification of those under their charge and Government. This, as he very well says, is essential to the Church, as it

is a Society; and there can be no Society without Government; and no Government if every one be allowed the Priviledge to question and disobey its Laws and constitutions; nothing being more rational, then that they who are intrusted with the reins of Government, should be invested with a Power to decide and determine all Differences and Controversies arising in that Government; and whoever will not acquiesce therein, ought to be banisht the Society: But the Paralogisme is very gross and foul, to argue, That because they who submit not to the Laws and Constitutions of a Society, ought to be banisht that Society; therefore they who submit not to the Laws and constitutions of the Church, ought to be banisht the Commonwealth. 'Tis sufficient to the ends of Government, they be banisht that Society only, whose Laws and Constitutions they submit not unto; and so this Answerer says well, *Non opus est habere civem qui parere nescit*; neither Church nor Commonwealth have need of those persons who know not how to obey. But till there be a due distinction made between the Church and State; between civil and religious Societies: and that liberty in Religion allowed unto all men which the Law of Nature, and positive Law of God, allows and requires the exercise of; we can never hope to see Religion flourish, nor Peace and Quiet in Christendome.

QUERY

Query VI.

Whether is there any visible living Judge in Doubts and Controversies of Religion, to whose determinations any man is bound to yield his assent and obedience, against the Dictates of his own Conscience, guided (according to the best of his light and knowledge) by the rule of Gods word?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

A Clear and positive Answer to this Query, would go far towards the ending our greatest differences and Disputes in Religion: For either, there is, or there is not such a Judge as is here inquired after: if such an one there be; let him be produc'd, and his determinations in all Controversial points, be made known, that they may be submitted to: or if there be no such Judge, why are any molested and troubled for going according to their own Judgements and Consciences, when it is their duty so to do?

what is said of a Churches being a Society, and that every Society may agree upon the means by which all differences arising in it, may be determin'd, that may probably violatate the Peace and Unity thereof; is not to the present Question, which is only concerning such a Judge in Doubts and Controversies of Religion; to whose determinations, every one is bound to yield his

Assent

Assent and obedience against his own Judgement. We have already acknowledg'd, That they who submit not to the Laws and Constitutions of a Church, ought to be cast out of that Church; which is a sufficient means, and the only means of preserving the Peace and Unity thereof: And if the Church of *England* assumes no other Power or Privilege; there is no ground of quarrel or exceptions against her for that: But whereas, he says, *She does not like the Papists, own any Judge of Controversies in Religion*; If he means Infallible Judge, like the Papists; none says *She does*: Or if his meaning be, That *She* owns no such Judge of Controversies, as to oblige any to acquiesce in her Determinations, against their own Judgements, as it seems to be, by his saying, *She requires none of her Members to yield obedience to her Determinations, against the Dictates of their Consciences*: why does he, molest and trouble any for not yielding such obedience. And if *all she demands*, as he says, be but, *That obedience be given to those Laws which are undoubtedly Divine; An acquiescence yielded to some disputable points, &c.* (which are not against a mans Conscience) and a conformity to some indifferent Rites, &c. (which all judge to be indifferent) no rational man can sure except against any of this: nor deny the Governours of the Church of *England* to be as much Umpires, and Judges in these matters, as the Pastors and Elders in any of the Separated Congregations.

It is, as he very well says, *A vain thing for men to plead, that they make Conscience their guide, unless they take Scripture for their rule.* Nor can any plead Conscience for disobeying *Lawful Authority in things innocent and indifferent,* where they judge the things commanded to be so; but what some may count indifferent, others may judge sinful. The Scripture commanding obedience, and to be Subject for Conscience-sake; does sufficiently manifest that none ought to obey, or comply, in any thing against Conscience, since none against Conscience can be Subject for Conscience-sake.

It cannot be denied; but *[that horrid Impieties and Immoralities have been acted under pretence of Conscience;* though they can never be justified upon the account of Conscience: and where any plead Conscience against all sense of duty, it is but just with God to leave them to a reprobate state of mind: but some mens abandoning, or abusing Conscience, will never justify others despising and deriding of it.

Whether Dissenters endeavour after the best Information they are able to attain unto, and in other things do their duties, is no part of this Query. But if they do not, they are too blame, and will have the more to answer for another day; and cannot with that satisfaction bear their present sufferings, which otherwise they might do. As for the grounds of their Separation, *Whether sufficient to justify it, or excuse them of Schism;* will be more seasonably argued, when this Answerer, or his Adherents, shall

shall tell us of such a Judge as in the Query is inquired after, to determine who is in the right, and who in the wrong; who keeps to, and who swerves from the rule of the Gospel.

Query VII.

Whether to inflict Corporal punishments upon any as transgressors in those matters, which no man or Society of men whatever, have Authority to pronounce a Judicial definitive Sentence in, so as to make it any mans duty to yield his Assent or obedience thereunto; Be not to Execute before Judgement? And whether to do so, be not against all Rules and Forms of Justice both Divine and humane, and such a violation of the Law and light of Nature, as no sober or judicious Heathen was ever yet guilty of?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

HAd not this officious person taken on him the answering Questions, before he understood them, he might have spar'd his pains in all he hath here said; having only beaten the Air, and fought with his own Shadow. 'Tis not therefore the *Gentlemans being meanly read*, as he says, but the Clergy-mans not understanding what he reads, that obtrudes upon the World the errors and absurdities we here meet with; the Query not being so impertinent, as his ignorance apprehends it; nothing being more evidently unjust, then that any should suffer as transgressors in those matters, where-

in none are authoris'd to pass a judicial definitive Sentence, whether they have therein transgressed or not; in which case, to punish, is to Execute before Judgement; and that, we say, is such a violation of the Law and light of Nature, as no sober or judicious Heathen was ever yet guilty of, Have we not then to do with an Ingenious and Pleasant person, who having spent above twenty pages to no purpose, being wholly from the Question, hath at last the face or folly rather, to tell us, *He hopes, now it appears to be no violation of the Law or light of Nature, to inflict punishments in matters of Religion*: when every Child that could but read *English* would have told him; That not to, inflict punishments in matters of Religion, but to Execute before Judgement, was the violation of the Law and light of Nature mention'd in the Querie: And though this might serve for a sufficient Reply, to so pertinent and judicious an Answer; yet least he should conceit himself, to have said something material, though not to the present Question, we will examine all he here says, as we have done his preceding answers, though little or nothing to the Questions before him, as every intelligent and discerning Reader sees.

None sure ever deny'd judicious Heathens to have been guilty of inflicting Coporal punishments upon Christians; yet did none of them ever do it, before they judg'd Christianity it self Criminal; and so did not Execute before Judgement, though it were an erroneous and
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an unrighteous Judgement. And if, as he says, *it were heretofore the Devils policy to serve himself of those who were most Eminent for intellectual and moral accomplishments in persecuting Christs Disciples, to beget in undiscerning minds the greater prejudice against them*; he seems now to have lost much of his ancient subtilty, rarely employing in that base work, but the most vicious and flagitious livers.

It will, I doubt not, puzzle this Answerer to prove what he affirms, *viz. That they who are serious and reserv'd, and stillest in their lives and Conversations, are the greatest opposers of Gods Truths, and the Churches Peace*; the contrary being evident, and the very assertion, a contradiction of it self.

Liberty of Conscience, and the Magistrates Power in Religion, have of late, indeed been the Subject of many mens thoughts and discourses. But none, sure, do affirm that the Magistrate is not to use all due and proper means to bring men to the knowledge of God, and of the service he requies of them: But that secular force is a means conducive thereunto; many, indeed, do deny: the liberty of Conscience therefore pleaded for, by those who are concern'd for the Honour of Religion, and Power of Godliness; is not, as he says, *That men may serve, or not serve God, at their pleasure*, But that all men may be allowed the liberty of serving God, as by the rule of his word, they judge he would be served, while under pretence thereof, they become not guilty of any
moral

ral evil or impiety: And that none be forc'd to conform to such ways and modes of worship, as they judge sinful, or may not be fully perswaded of the lawfulness of; since whatever is not of Faith, is Sin. But as the best of things, are not exempt from the worst of abuses, so 'tis not impossible, but as some plead for Liberty of Conscience, that they may render unto God an acceptable service; others again may plead for liberty also, to be excused, the preformance of those duties God requires of them: To distinguish therefore between these, ought to be the Magistrates great care and concern. But for this Answerer to say, *Because 'tis the Magistrates duty to let men alone in the duty they owe to God their Creator and Redeemer, (i.e. in the preformance of those religious duties God requires of them, and none can deny to be truly such;) therefore God may be either serv'd or Blasphem'd, own'd or disown'd, by them; is* such a conclusion, as none I think but himself, would have made: for no sober man, sure, ever doubted it the Magistrates duty to see, as much as in himlyes, that God be own'd, and duly serv'd, by all under him: and all moral evils and impieties, restrain'd and punish't. Nor can any pretence of Conscience excuse, much less justify, as he says, Blasphemy; or exempt any guilty thereof, or of the like moral evils, from the Magistrates revenging Power, which were, indeed, for him to bear the Sword in vain.

And now our Answerer, *craves his Reader's patience, by speaking, as he says, something largely*

to this Query; when he should have crav'd his pardon rather for mistaking the Question, and entertaining him with so impertinent and tedious a Combate with his own shadow: But so bewitching is the pleasure of Conquest, that sensible of his advantage on his man of Straw, he never thinks he has sufficiently beaten him. To begin therefore, *He craves leave to tell the Gentleman*, the Clergyman is none of the wisest, to think that *Doomsday's Judgement is the Judgement here spoken of*. But to do him right on all occasions, he is very much in the right, in saying, 'Tis no anticipation of Gods Judgement at Doomsday, to inflict Corporal or pecuniary Penalties upon those that offend against the known and plain rules of duty in matters of Religion; and therefore he need not have askt to have it shown, why it should be so, more in Religion, then in civil concerns. A Magistrate, saith he, for pronouncing a Sentence of Condemnation upon a Felon or a Murtherer, may be said to Execute before Judgement, as well as a Justice of Peace for granting a Warrant to leavy 12d. upon an Atheist or Papist, for not repairing upon the Lords day to his Parish Church: And why then will this Gentleman (this ignorant Gentleman) say, that the Execution of such a mild, or perhaps a severer Law, is a violation of the very Law and light of Nature? It is indeed a Question fit to be askt, and had been a folly never to have been answer'd, had he said any such thing. But with this learned and judicious Answerers good leave, the Gentleman will take leave to say,
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That should a Magistrate pronounce Sentence of Condemnation, and Execute a Felon, or a Murtherer, before he were Convict and Judg'd a Felon, or a Murtherer; it would be such a violation of the Law and light of Nature, as no sober or Judicious Heathen was ever yet guilty of. The like may be said of levying 12d. upon any for not coming to Church, before he be Convict of not coming, and his not coming, Judg'd a Crime.

That all Nations, whether Jewish, Heathen or Christian, have as he says, assum'd to themselves the power of protecting the Honour of those Dieties they have made the object of their worship, and punisht those offenders that have either neglected their duty, or affronted the Majesty of those Gods which they have pretended to serve; is so evident and notorious, and agreeable to the Law and light of Nature, that 'tis time lost to prove it; our Answerer therefore, might have spar'd his pains in this particular, and not have given himself the trouble of proving, what none sure ever deny'd or doubted.

But he tells us of *Grotius* his observation out of *Sneca*, viz. *That those who violate Religion, have various kinds of punishments inflicted on them, but there is no Nation but inflicts some.* No certainly, it being so far from a violation of the Law and light of Nature, that nothing is more consonant thereunto. And who, I pray, are greater violators of Religion, then they who subvert, or alter its Divine or Original Institutions? When *Numa Pompilius*, as he

he observes, *Instituted a Pontifex Maximus, or Chief Priest, and committed to him all the sacred writings and mysteries, gave him order with what Sacrifices, and upon what days, and in what places the Rites of Religion were to be performed; had it not been a violation of his Religion, to have us'd other Sacrifices, upon other days, in other places, and with other Rites then he appointed? And if among Heathens, as he farther observes, both publick and private Mysteries were all determined by the Chief Priest, that it might be known where the Common People might repair to worship their Gods, lest there should be any disorder or confusion in Religion, either by neglecting the sacred Rites of their Country, or introducing any that were Forreign and Strange: Shall not we allow the Lord Jesus our High Priest to determine the sacred mysteries of his Religion, with all Rites and Ceremonies thereof, that under pretence of Order and Decency, there may not be introduced, that disorder and confusion in the Christian Religion, we see at this day, through the neglect of those sacred Rites of his Institution, and the introducing such as are Forraign and strange into his worship. Let not, therefore, those that abhor Idols, commit Sacrilege: And if Heathen Romans, as he observes, were so careful, that none but the Roman Dieties might be worship'd; vnd that after no other manner but that of their own Institution; How much more careful and concerned ought Christians to be, that none but the Almighty, the Holy one of Israel be worship'd,*
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and that after no other manner, then that of his own Institution and appointment.

And since, as this Answerer observes, *That wise people were so jealous and careful, least any Innovation should be made in their Religion; and least its Uniformity and Integrity should be dissolved by the Customs and mixtures of other Countries; How much more ought Christs Disciples to be jealous and careful that no innovations be made; or humane Inventions added to Christs Institutions, either as to matter, or to mannes, (beyond the orderly observance of such circumstances as necessarily attend such Ordinances, as Christ himself hath Instituted) least the uniformity and integrity of his worship, should be dissolv'd by the Customs and mixtures of other Countries; in the establishing of different ways and modes of worship, according to the variety of mens Inventions and Fancies. And since, not only Grotius from St. Anstin, observes, That the Romans were successful in their Arms, because they had a hearty respect and veneration for Religion: But the Apostle tell us, That Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come; surely it can be against no rule or form of Justice, or Prudence, nor any violation of the Law or light of Nature; for Christian Princes to be as zealous for a true Religion, as the Heathens were for a false one. But, as the wise man says, He that Answereth a matter before he hear it; so he that Answereth a Question before he understands it, It shall be folly and shame unto him.*

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And now we are told of the zeal and care, the holy Kings and Governours of the Jewish Nation, had of Religion; which will never prove, *That to execute before Judgement, is no violation of the Law and light of Nature*: Not in the least prejudice any Principle these Queries labour to support.

When he shall inform us, *What Davids ordering the turns and courses of the Priests; and setting up Musick in the Temple, is to this Query*, it may be consider'd of; or if he would interpose it, That civil Magistrates, without particular Warrant or Commission from God, may order or appoint, in the worship and service of God; what they please, or shall Judge conducive to the Honour and Glory of God, or the decent and Orderly performance of Divine worship, 'tis a Question we are not at present concern'd in; and shall therefore pass it by.

Asa did not any thing, which was by any ^{2 Chro. 14} deny'd to be his duty; nor commanded ought in others, which they did not acknowledge likewise to be theirs; And, notwithstanding our Answerers asserting the contrary, The Covenant which *Asa*, and all *Judah* and *Benjamin*, ^{2 Chro. 15} and the Strangers with them, enter'd into, was voluntary in all parties; for it is said, *They did it with all their heart, and with all their soul; and again v. 14. They swore unto the Lord with a loud voice and with shouting, and with Trum-pets, and with Cornets? And all Judah rejoiced at the Oath, for they had sworn with all their hearts, and sought him with their whole desire,*

and he was found of them : There cannot well be greater evidence to prove any action to have been voluntary ; For, God is not found of those who seek him not in sincerity, and with a willing mind ; who draw nigh unto him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him, Let none therefore, too hastily credit this Answerer in ought he says ; but like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures, whether it be so or no.

Jehoshaphat, we are told, used his Coercive Power in taking away the High places and groves dedicated to Idolatry, and what did he therein which all Judah acknowledg'd not to be his duty ? And who did ever deny it to be in the Magistrates Power, to send Teachers to instruct the People in the Law of the Lord ? or judg'd it a violation of the Law or light of Nature, for him to do ?

And what did Jehojada, in putting Athalia to death ; and in making a Covenant between him and between all the People, and between the King that they should be the Lords People : And in breaking down the Altars and Images in the House of Baal, and slaying the Priests thereof before the Altar ; which he had not good Authority to do ? and which all Judah approv'd not of ?

The Reformations of Hezekiah and Josiah, were very eminent, but nothing done by either of them ; or by any of the good Kings of Judah, doth in the least oppugne ought in this, or in any of these Queries.

What

What did Hezekiah in opening the Doors of the Temple that had been long shut up, in cleansing the City, and Kingdom from Idols; in restoring the Priests to their Offices and dues; in reviving the Sacrifices, which had been long neglected, and celebrating the Pass-over with great magnificence; more then what every mans Conscience told him was right and necessary to be done.

And did Josiah, (in making a Covenant before ^{2 Chro. 34.} the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his Commandments, and his Testimonies, and his Statutes, with all ~~his~~ heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the Covenant which are written in the Book of the Law of the Lord; and causing all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin, to stand to it; yea, in making all that were present in Israel to serve the Lord their God; Do ought which any acknowledged not to be both his and their duty? and how made he them to do all this? was it by secular force and Power; or by reading unto them all the words of ^{verse 30.} the Book of the Covenant that was found in the House of the Lord? was it not by convincing them it was their duty so to do? for it reacht no farther then to those who were present; And who denies the like Power unto Christian Magistrates? Nor needs there any great search in the Annals of time, and History of Ages, to know that Princes and People never more prosper'd, then when Religion was countenanc'd, Idolatry punisht and the great Causes and occasions of Schism (the requiring other Terms and Conditions of Church

Church-Fellowship and Communion, then God requires) *were unknown or removed.*

Nor is there ought in the Instances before mentioned, That needs any such constructions or evasions as this Answerer speaks of to reconcile them to the liberty in Religion pleaded for: For who did ever deny unto Magistrates Power to command, and require their People to serve God, as God hath exprest and declar'd he will be serv'd? or to remove such outward appearances and Monuments of worship, as are evidently and apparently false and Idolatrous? which in both instances, was but the Case of the before-mentioned Kings of Judah: But that which is excepted against, Is the prohibiting any to worship God, in such a way as none can say to be against the mind and will of God, or displeasing unto him: or the compelling any to worship God in such a way, as they Judge sinful; or are not satisfied in the lawfulness of. And though the State of Religion under the Gospel, be far differing from what it was under the Law; yet, surely, Princes are not, as he says, *in a worse condition by the coming of Christ, then they were in the Jewish Commonwealth;* where they had no power to command ought in Religion, but what God willed or commanded; and so they may do still, by all the ways and means appointed by God, and useful thereunto.

But what is it this Answerer hath found in the 49 chap of *Isaiah*, to prove the Magistrates Coercive Power in Religion? Gods affection-
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ate answer to his peoples complaint, promising never to forget them, will not do it; neither his promise of *delivering them from their Enemies, and adding to their numbers*: nor yet, *that Kings should be nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers to his Church*; For Nurses do not use to force and coerce their Children; but nourish and cherish them. But this place does indeed imply or promise, that there should be Sovereign Princes, who should nourish and cherish the People of God; and take care that no hurt or violence be offer'd unto them, or to his Church; which is as much as the Metaphor will bear, since true Religion cannot be forc't, or upheld, by Secular power: 'Tis Antichristianism that is so supported and maintain'd, by those *who give their power and strength* *Rev. 17.*
unto the Beast: And they carry the Metaphor *12. 13.*
too far, who would have Princes, like Nurses to feed their Children; Christ having appointed other Overseers of his flock for that work; whom the Magistrate ought indeed to protect and defend, in the performance thereof; but not to dictate, nor prescribe to them therein.

There may not be wanting expositors, who as he says, *may conceive this Prophecie to have been fulfilled, when Emperours and Kings became Christians, and enacted Laws to secure the Faith of Christ from all Enemies, &c.* though they have no great Reason for it; it being but too well known, that Christian Religion hath suffer'd more then ever it gain'd by pretended Christian Magistrates: For if *Constantine* protected

rected the Truth; his Successor *Constantius*, with divers others after him, persecuted it: Yea, the generality of Christian Magistrates for above a thousand years together, by the inflictions of the Bishop of *Rome* were its great opposers and oppressors: and though for several years past, God hath blessed this Nation, beyond most of the Nations of the Earth, with Kings and Queens, who have protected and defended the Truths of the Gospel, and the people of God, from the Tyranny and oppression of that great Enemy to both; yet in respect of Christendom, there is little cause to say that this Prophecy was fulfilled, when Kings and Emperours became Christians.

As there have been Laws enacted by Kings and States in behalf of the Truth; so there have been infinitely more enacted against it: error too soon and generally prevailing over the Christian world; which for a Protestant to Question, were to deny his Faith. He cannot be thought a Friend to Truth, who shall oppose any means conducive unto its promotion; But whoever shall consider, how few of the Mighty and Noble of the Earth, to whom wordly Power and Authority is committed, are called unto the knowledge thereof; must acknowledge likewise, that where one Law hath been enacted in behalf of the Truth, hundreds have been enacted to its prejudice: It is not therefore in opposition to Truth, but for the Truths sake, that we plead for its standing upon its own Bottom; and prevailing by its own

own strength and efficacy : For as the Truths of the Gospel were at first planted, and propagated throughout the world, by the Ministry of the Gospel, and influence of the Divine Spirit, without the aid and assistance of the secular Power; so by the same means and methods, they are best secured and preserved: nor is secular force and power a means by God appointed, or in its nature conducive to the promoting of Truth, since 'tis conviction and not force, must induce assent: And though some Hereticks may have seem'd to retract their opinions, upon the severity of penal Laws against them; there is little reason to believe that any of them thereby became real converts; for, though force may make an Hypocrite, it can never make a true Believer.

If we believe not the Donatists and Independants so nearly related as this Answerer tells us, having but his say so, without other proof; and if we are not Convinced, That *Ambrosius* changing his mind, proves second thoughts to be always best; it will not, we hope, be thought any violation of the Law or light of Nature; 'tis not unknown how that Pious Father was molested by that petulant Faction, no wonder therefore he should approve of what ever delivered him from them. But would it not be very pleasant for Magistrates to change their Laws, as oft as Doctors change their minds; and that every new opinion should be the ground of a new Statute: And yet I fully approve of what this Learned and Pious Father

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says,

That Kings (as is commanded them from Heaven) serve God in that Office, when in their Kingdoms, they Command what is good; and Prohibit what is evil; and that not only in things that belong unto humane Society, but also unto Divine Religion; So they command but what is known and allowed to, be good, and in mens power to do: and Prohibit no more then what is by the light of Nature, or some positive Law of God, apparently evil; And if there be more passages to the same purpose, as this Answerer tells us, he may spare his pains in transcribing them; for that they make as little to his purpose, as against ours. And whereas he tells us, The same Arguments the Socinians and Independants, urge against the Magistrates Coercive Power, were in St. Austin's days, made use of by the Donatists, and answered by that Father, The substance of which was, That no man was to be compelled to the Faith; and that Religion was not to be chosen, but out of freedom of will: Let him prove the contrary, and I will own my self his Convert. And though nothing be more evident to common Sense and Reason; so that it needs no Authority to countenance or support it: yet since he pretends Authority against it, he may here likewise, if he please, what others have said for it.

*Ire. Chap.
6. Sect. 6.*

A man, saith our Learned Dr. Spillingfleet; Hath not the power over his own understanding, much less can others have it, And then cites, Picus Mirandulus, saying, Nullus credit aliquid esse verum; quia vult credere id esse verum; non est

*est enim in potestate hominis facere aliquid appere-
re intellectu suo verum quando voluerit: No*
man can believe any thing to be true, because
he would believe it true; for it is not in a mans
power to make what he will appear true to
him.

And Lactantius saith, *Non opus vi & injuria,
quia Religio cogi non potest; There needs no force
and injury* (for so he esteems force in Religion
to be) for that Religion cannot be compelled.
And saith Ambrose) *ea que Divina, imperatorum* Lib. 5.
potestati non esse subjecta: Divine things are not Cap. 23.
subject to the Emperours power. And again,
writing to *Valentinian the younger*, he saith,
ut putes te in ea que Divina sunt, imperiale ali-
quod jus habere: Do not think thy self to have Epist. 31.
any imperial right over Divine things. And ad foro.
else where; *That Christ sent his Disciples to sow
the Faith; who were not to compell; but to teach;
not to exercise force and power, but to extol the
Doctrine of humility. So Tertullian, Lex na-
va non se vindicat ultore gladio. The Gospel
does not support it self by the secular Power.
And says Hilarie, Deus cognitionem sui docuit
potius, quam exegit; God hath rather taught,
then extorted the Knowledge of himself. And
writing to the Emperour Constantius; we be-* Lib. 2 ad
seech, saith he, not with words only, but with Const.
*tears, that the Catholick Church be no longer op-
pressed with greivous injuries; and sustain in-
tolerable persecution and contumelies, and that
which is shameful, even of our Brethren: Let your
clemency therefore provide and appoint, that all*

Judges every where, to whom Provinces are committed, who ought to take care and charge of Commonwealth matters only, refrain meddling with Religion. The like may be produc'd from most of the Fathers, who expressly exclude force and compulsion in Religion, being unanimous in this; *That no man ought to be required to profess, what he believes not; nor practise in Religion, what he approves not.* It is not, therefore sufficient for this Answerer to tell us, *That many of the Ancients own and have proved the Magistrates Coercive Power in the concerns of Religion;* without giving us farther evidence thereof; since the Nature and being of Religion, is inconsistent with compulsion: Though 'tis not denied, but that the Magistrate may require the performance of those Religious duties, which none can deny to be such; which is as much as any of the good Kings of Israel or Judah ever did; which none sure, ever thought to be any violation of the Law or light of Nature. Nor does the Statute *Prima Elizabethæ*, prove as he says, *that our Ancestors had other thoughts concerning this matter: because they levied the penalty of 12 d. upon such persons as had no lawfull or reasonable excuse for not coming to Church;* since they who have not that, and yet come not, may reasonably enough be punisht. If Independants, who say a man should not steal, do themselves steal, they are the more inexcusable: But 'tis not impossible but this Answerer may be mistaken in matter of Fact: For, though he would have it thought,

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the Quakers who were put to death in New-England, suffer'd for Religion; the contrary is well known; it being only for the insufferable disturbances they gave to the publick worship of God, wherever they came; and that not till after other ways and means were used to have reclaimed them, or prevented those disorders; they returning after Banishment upon Banishment; and even at the place of Execution, were offer'd their lives, if they would then but have promised to depart the Country, or to forbear disturbing the publick Assemblies for the worship of God, as is related in the Printed Narrative of that matter: and though it cannot be denied, but some milder course might have been taken with them; yet they suffer'd not for Religion, but for disturbing the publick Peace, in disturbing the publick Worship and Service of God.

As for his conclusive citation out of *Calvin*. *That there are none plead against the Magistrates Coercive Power and Sword of Justice, but those who out of Conscioufness of their own Heresies, Schisms, and Misdeeds, are in danger and affraid of suffering by it; and therefore would wrest the Sword out of the Magistrates hand, that they might persevere in their Heresies, Schisms, Blasphemies, and offences without punishment and remorse: If these are the words of that Eminent Divine and Servant of Gods, I can upon my own sure and certain knowledge say, He is therein greatly mistaken, in that there are who plead against the Magistrates Coercive Power in Religion.*
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on no other account then the Interest of the Truth, and happiness of all Interests; that so neither the Magistrate may incur the guilt of punishing the Innocent; nor the guiltless suffer in the place of the nocent, through that darkness and ignorance, which is upon the minds of the most of men, in the things of God, and the Truths of Religion; of which whoever is not Convinc't, by the too lamentable experience of almost all Ages, Times, and Places, in which Truth hath suffer'd in the stead of error, and error been promoted instead of Truth; I shall not hope to rectifie their Judgements, by any thing I can here say. Did, indeed, any plead for Blasphemers or Evil-doers; or that impious or immoral persons of any kind, might be exempt from the Magistrates Jurisdiction and Authority to punish, there might be some colour for what hath been here said; But while the Plea is only against the Magistrates interposing and exercising his Power and Authority, in disputable points, in Controversies only of Truth and Error in Religion, of which he is not a competent Judge, and which are not within his Province to determine and punish; It is a most unreasonable and uncharitable Censure, not improbably proceeding from this Eminent and good man (though herein greatly mistaken) upon occasion of his too severe dealing with *Servetus*, whom he caused to be burnt alive at *Geneva*.

QUERY

Query VIII.

*Whether it is not Incongruous and Heterogeniall,
to punish Corporally, man erring Spiritually?*

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THE Question is not here, *Whether any Judge or Justice can take cognizance of mens Thoughts or Consciences; nor when wickedness in the heart is manifested by external action, whether liable to the Magistrates Power and Inspection; none, I think, ever questioning either of them.* But whether men erring Spiritually, ought Corporally to be punished. Paul's reckoning Heresies among the works of the flesh; and telling the Corinthians they were Carnal, from the Schisms and disorders that were amongst them, does not prove it. But says this Answerer, Certainly any sensual sin may be punished by the Civil Sword: What thinks he then of Hatred, Wrath, Covetousness, Emulations, Envyings, and the like; which are sensual Sins, or works of the flesh, yet not therefore to be punished by the Civil Sword.

But why are they as he tells us, *Who gather Churches, &c. more then Spiritually Erronious?* How comes that which was the great Errand and Duty of the Apostles, and their immediate Successors; now to become so great a Crime? Is it that Men, or Children rather, are now born Christians? or being born in a Christian Com-

Commonwealth (as it is usually, though improperly exprest) or in such, or such a Parish, they do thereby become a Church of Christ? No one, certainly, who understands what either a Christian, or a Church of Christ is, can think so. And wherein do they, as he says, *despise Government, and Trample upon all Laws?* Did he not but now tell us, *The Church was a Society, and that there can be no Society without Government;* How then comes the gathering of Churches to be a despising of Government, and trampling upon all Laws? undoubtedly there is a Law, and a Divine Law to, for the gathering of Churches, if the Gospel be the Law of God; as I hope, neither this Answerer, nor any who own themselves Christians, doubt it to be.

There is little reason, sure to say as he does, *The inticers to Idolatry, mention'd in Deuteronomy, might as well have pleaded, it was only an error of their minds, as any of our Dissenting Ministers;* for that none, certainly, can imagine that it could be a sin of Ignorance in them, to draw any from the true God, to worship Idols; it being against the very light of Nature, in that, as the Apostle tells us, *That which may*
 ROM. I. 19. *be known of God, was manifest in them.* It may therefore, for any thing this Answerer hath here said, *Be both Incongruous and Heterogenial, to punish Corporally, men erring Spiritually.*

Query I x.

Whether secular force and compulsion, in things of Divine and Supernatural Revelation, be not the Arms of Antichrist, and not of the true Church?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THIS Answerer might have done well to have inform'd us, *How secular force and compulsion in Religion towards some, is, as he says, Anti-Christian, and not towards others; the difference not being evident, at least to all capacities.*

We are not here enquiring after, what is so much a violation of the Law of Nations, as of the Law of Nature: and though our Answerer expresses his dislike of the *Spaniards* dealings with the *Indians*; graciously acknowledging that propriety is not forfeited by unbelief; Yet but now speaking of Dissenters here, he said, *If they disapprove of the Decisions of their Superiours, the world is wide enough, they may* *Ans. to the 5th Q.* *leave the Government, and betake themselves to the Communion of purer Churches; which is but in other words to say, Be of the Religion of your Country, or abandon your Properties, with the Land of your Nativity. But should providence permit the Establishment of a Religion in this Nation he approves not of, (if he be not resolv'd to approve of whatever shall*

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be the National Religion) would he not think himself hardly dealt with, to be requir'd to Conform, or to abandon his Native Country? He may do well therefore, to meditate a little on that no less Divine, then Moral precept; *Of doing to others; as he would they should do to him.*

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The Cannon he mentions, is indeed, very pertinent to our purpose: So likewise is what he Cites from *Tertullian* and *Lactantius*: But then, without the least colour or shadow of Reason; (and perhaps only because *Grotius* says, *It is not just or lawful to make War upon any, because they will not embrace the Christian Religion*) He would have this to be understood only of *Princes raising Wars, against Pagan Nations to compel and force them to the Profession of Christianity, and imbracing of the Gospel.* But 'tis very well and judiciously observ'd of him, *That these things nothing concern a Kingdom, in which there is a visible and universal profession of the same Religion;* in that there is, indeed, no need of compelling or forcing any to profess, what all already do profess. But yet, even in such a Kingdom, *Magistrates, he says, may use compulsive methods to secure their People from a totall and manifest Apostacy from the true Faith, &c.* which we would freely allow him, if compulsive methods could secure a People from Apostacy; and that through ignorance or mistake of the Truth, Magistrates did not too often instead thereof compel to error. But none sure will say, but that Magistrates may, and

and ought, to repress such Seducers as threaten the extirpation of their own Government : yea, and of the true Faith too ; were it once determined, which amongst the many that would be so accounted, were the true. What he says of the Religious Princes of the Jewish Church, hath been already spoken to.

Query X.

Whether any one can be compelled by secular force or compulsion, to perform any one Religious duty acceptably; since God accepts not of any but what is voluntary, and of Faith, which cannot be forc't ? And of what use then, is secular Force and compulsion in Religion, but to make men sin or suffer ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

T*His Query, which this Answerer says, with others is forged in the Shaps of the Socinians and Anabaptists; is with the rest grounded on the Rule of Gods word : with which he seems to be little acquainted, or with the due performance of Religious Duties, in saying, That it might with as much strength of Reason, be urg'd against the Magistrates using compulsive methods towards his Subjects for the performance of the Duties of the 2d. Table, as those of the first. There being some difference between forcing men to moral actions and Divine duties : since in things moral, the action,*

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however circumstantiated, is in it self positively good or evil: But in things of Divine Institution, the manner only of the performance makes the action good or evil; and therefore it is said, *He that Sacrificeth an Ox, is as if he kild a Man; and he that killeth a Lamb as if he cut off a Dogs neck;* where the manner of performing the Command, is not observ'd as well as the matter. The like may be said of all such Gospel Duties, the goodness whereof depends wholly upon the Institution; and therein the manner as well as the matter, must be punctually observ'd; nay the manner of performing these duties, determines the matter of them; for if they be performed in their due manner, the action is good; if not, the action it self is sinfull. This Answerer therefore runs himself into this error, by not distinguishing between things in their own Nature good or evil, and those things whose goodness depends wholly upon Institution; and consequently on their due performance. *Authority, therefore, may oblige men to be Loyal and Peaceable, Honest and Just,* which are moral vertues; and punish them, if they be *Rebellious and Seditious, Injurious and Thieves,* which are moral evils. Yet, cannot force any in the sight of God to an acceptable performance of the one, nor abstinence from the other, because God accepts only of the Heart; or an hearty obedience, which cannot be so forc't.

It hath been already acknowledg'd, in the case of the Kings of *Israel and Judah, That*
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Magistrates may command their People to serve God, as God hath commanded; and they are convince't and satisfied, he will be served; but no otherwise, since whatever, is not of Faith, is sin; which the Magistrate may not compel to: yet may he prohibit the doing of any thing, which may either dishonour or destroy Government.

Every King is, as he says, both the Minister of God, and the Ruler of his People; and oblig'd to the duties he mentions, as hath been already acknowledg'd. Nor are as he says, our Governours so much to consider our willingness to serve God, as our benefit, and their duty: But it is neither their duty to force any to worship God, after any other way or manner, then they are perswaded God will be worship't; or that will be acceptable unto him; since, as hath been said, what is not of Faith, is sin, which the Magistrate by forcing to, becomes guilty of. Nor is it for their Peoples benefit to be forc't to any thing in Religion, beyond their Convictions; all such performances being in themselves sinfull. And for this Answerer to say, It will perhaps, be found as great an Act of Justice and Charity, to force some to go to Church, as 'tis to force some Boys to go to School; speaks him very unfit to be an Instructor and Teacher of others, who is himself so unacquainted with the nature and essence of Religion.

And whereas he says, The Magistrate will find the benefit by exercising his Coercive Power, (in matters of Religion, for 'tis of that alone we
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are here speaking) in securing the honour of his own Laws and Authority; the contrary is most evident: for wherever his Authority interposeth it self where the Authority of God is immediately concern'd, (as it is in all the Actions and duties of Religion) and shall by Religious and Pious Persons be Judg'd to interfer therewith; it will certainly be contemn'd and disobeyed, as were the Decrees of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Darius*, Recorded in the third and sixth chapters of *Daniel*; and as was the Authority of the Chief Priests and of the Rulers of the *Jews*, when they forbad *Peter* and *John* to speak or teach in the name of *Jesus*. Nor is it likely to be more beneficial to the persons on whom such methods are used; for being no means of Gods appointment unto any such ends, as well as in its own nature thereunto improper, his blessing cannot be expected to go along with it. And to say, 'Tis better for men to come within the possibility of being perswaded to Religion, and reduced to sober apprehensions of it; then to continue in their Schisms, and voluntary neglect of all Piety; is very wide from this Question, which neither countenances Schism, nor discountenances Piety; but would not that any should be forced to serve God, in any other way or manner, then God will be served, or they Judge acceptable unto him; nor are all to be charged with Schism, and a voluntary neglect of Piety, who frequent not the Publick worship wherever they live: much less to be out of a possibility of being perswaded to

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Religion, and void of all sober apprehensions of it: which yet compulsion is so far from perswading or reducing any unto, that its efficacy lyes the other way; it breeds rather an averfion and abhorrency towards it, and towards those that use it. But says our Answerer, suppose the worst, (*viz.*) *That compelling men to Church, do not produce any inward change in their minds; yet certainly 'tis a means conducive to so blessed an end:* But who, I would know, tells him so? 'Tis no means, I am sure, of Christs appointment; nor did he himself ever use it; salvation indeed, he offer'd, which who so refus'd at his Peril; those that had ears to hear, let them hear, being the usual conclusion of his Sermons: He sent likewise his Disciples to Preach the Kingdom of God, but not to force or compel any to hear them: But suppose, says *Deter. Q.* the Pious and Learned Bishop Davenant, *some Quest. 15.* *should be so obstinate they will not receive this Gospel, shall they then exercise no temporal Power? none at all,* says he, *They are commanded to shake off the dust from their feet as a Testimony against them; but they are not commanded to compel them by any external force or violence.* I would gladly know of this Answerer, should providence permit the Re-establishment of Popery in this Nation, whether the compelling him to Church, would be a means conducive to his Conversion; if it will, can he doubt but they who would esteem it a blessed work, should not be as zealous for it then, as he is now? Perhaps he may say the case is not the same; for he is in the right,

are here speaking) in securing the honour of his own Laws and Authority; the contrary is most evident: for wherever his Authority interposeth it self where the Authority of God is immediately concern'd, (as it is in all the Actions and duties of Religion) and shall by Religious and Pious Persons be Judg'd to interfer therewith; it will certainly be contemn'd and disobeyed, as were the Decrees of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Darius*, Recorded in the third and sixth chapters of *Daniel*; and as was the Authority of the Chief Priests and of the Rulers of the *Jews*, when they forbade *Peter* and *John* to speak or teach in the name of *Jesus*. Nor is it likely to be more beneficial to the persons on whom such methods are used; for being no means of Gods appointment unto any such ends, as well as in its own nature thereunto improper, his blessing cannot be expected to go along with it. And to say, 'Tis better for men to come within the possibility of being perswaded to Religion, and reduced to sober apprehensions of it; then to continue in their Schisms, and voluntary neglect of all Piety; is very wide from this Question, which neither countenances Schism, nor discountenances Piety; but would not that any should be forced to serve God, in any other way or manner, then God will be served, or they Judge acceptable unto him; nor are all to be charged with Schism, and a voluntary neglect of Piety, who frequent not the Publick worship wherever they live: much less to be out of a possibility of being perswaded to Religion.

Religion, and void of all sober apprehensions of it: which yet compulsion is so far from perswading or reducing any unto, that its efficacy lyes the other way; it breeds rather an averfion and abhorrency towards it, and towards those that use it. But says our Answerer, suppose the worst, (*viz.*) *That compelling men to Church, do not produce any inward change in their minds; yet certainly 'tis a means conducive to so blessed an end:* But who, I would know, tells him so? 'Tis no means, I am sure, of Christs appointment; nor did he himself ever use it; salvation indeed, he offer'd, which who so refus'd at his Peril; those that had ears to hear, let them hear, being the usual conclusion of his Sermons: He sent likewise his Disciples to Preach the Kingdom of God, but not to force or compel any to hear them: *But suppose, says Deter. Q. the Pious and Learned Bishop Davenant, some Quest. 15. should be so obstinate they will not receive this Gospel, shall they then exercise no temporal Power? none at all, says he, They are commanded to shake off the dust from their feet as a Testimony against them; but they are not commanded to compel them by any external force or violence.* I would gladly know of this Answerer, should providence permit the Re-establishment of Popery in this Nation, whether the compelling him to Church, would be a means conducive to his Conversion; if it will, can he doubt but they who would esteem it a blessed work, should not be as zealous for it then, as he is now? Perhaps he may say the case is not the same; for he is in the right,

right, while all others, on either hand of him, are in the wrong; which is not impossible, though very improbable; yet whilst others think themselves as much in the right as he, the case will be the same, and he may reasonably enough expect the same measure he metes, will be measur'd to him again.

That Hypocrasie, the sin against which our Blessed Saviour denounced so many woes, should be preferred, as by him it is, for the honour of Religion; is what I have not before met with: such Preachers therefore, may well plead for compelling to their Churches; who are not otherwise likely to have many hearers. Nor do I understand the Logick of *all mens being advantag'd by forceable methods*; because some may be externally reform'd; while others again are thereby apparently injur'd. And to what purpose does he here talk of *mens being restrained from acting their abominable Lusts*; which we no less wish then he; nor does this Query infer the contrary, though he would have it thought to countenance impiety, and a scornful contempt of the Church, and Institutions of Christ; when it aims only at the promoting of Piety, in a due observation of Christ's Institutions; by which the Nations, as well as Gods honour, will be best secured.

Ahabs humiliation which he instances in, was a voluntary action; he did it not by constraint, but was thereunto moved by what the Prophet said unto him, and makes not therefore against the drift of this Query. And who doubts

doubts that if a stop were put to gross Schisms (I mean what are truly such, and not unduly so call'd) and bare fac'd Atheism, with other villanies that abound amongst us, but it would be acceptable unto God, and all good men: As likewise the restraining of Seducers, from propagating their contagious errors, would this Answerer but (vouchsafe a clear and positive Answer to the 6th Query, and) tell us; who is Judge of Truth and Error, in disputable Points of Religion, and not always leave it to the strongest to determine. And to talk of Lawless and licentious Practices, being universally pleaded for; when the plea is only for a liberty to serve God, in Faith without doubting, is a strain beyond the ordinary bounds of Truth and Honesty.

But says our Answerer, If men are so perverse and incorrigible as not to be reformed themselves, yet the punishment that are inflicted upon them, may prevent the like sin in others: They may so, in such things as any are convinc'd to be sins: But what any shall judge to be theirs and others indispensable duties; the punishing of some for those things, will not deter others, who fear God, more then men, from doing the like, whatever they suffer for it: But so something be said, and Authorities cited, it matters not how applicable to the present Question.

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QUERY

Query XI.

Whether Christ's Rule of his Disciples under the Gospel be not by a Spiritual Power? and whether to use the Temporal Sword in Religious matters, be not to make the Weapons of the Gospel, not mighty through God, but mighty through the Magistrates Power; to Arm the Church with Weapons, Christ never gave her; and to make her a Military, rather then a spiritual Society.

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THough *what is mighty through the Magistrates Power*, is, as he says, *mighty through God*, as he is the original and Fountain of all Power; yet the Apostle tells us, *The weapons of their* 2 Cor. 10. *Warfare are not Carnal*; whereby he distinguishes between the Carnal Power of the Civil Magistrate, by which the world is Govern'd, in all worldly Affairs and Concerns; and the Spiritual Power wherewith Christ rules his Subjects under the Gospel: which this Answerer seems altogether unacquainted with; having, possibly, never felt the power and efficacy thereof in his own Soul; and to talk to such of a Spiritual Power, is like talking to blind men of colours.

But the Magistrate, says he, is Gods Minister, and that to the benefit and welfare of mens souls, as well as their worldly and outward Estates:
But

But how, or in what manner to the benefit and welfare of their Souls, he is not at present dispos'd to tell us; But would have us to believe, *the reason why Christ never made use of the Civil Magistrates Power, to recommend, or obtrude, as he phrases it, his Doctrine on the world; was because the secular Powers were in the days of his flesh, in open Enmity and Hostility against him.* But does he think Christ could not as easily have converted Magistrates, as others; had he so pleased? or does he not know that *To him was given all Power both in Heaven and on Earth;* Matt. 28. 18. and that had he thought it necessary or expedient for the Interest of Religion, he could as well have commanded the Magistrates Power, as any other? But he declin'd it, as we may reasonably enough suppose, to manifest to the world, that the Gospel, or true Religion, was wholly founded upon Spirtual Power, was compleat therein, and needed not the aid and assistance of Secular Force: But the Argument against the Magistrates Power in matters of Religion, is not so much from Christs not using it, as from the nature of Religion, which cannot be so forc't, it being seated in those faculties, to which outward violence can have no access: So that the unsuitableness of the means to the end aimed at, as well as Christs not serving himself of it for the propagation of Christian Religion; with the sufficiency of that Spirtual Power, *in the gifts he gave unto his Ministers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of his Body;* Eph. 4.

Is that which renders the Magistrates Authority in matters of Religion, not necessary, not to say more. And whereas this Answerer says, *That Christ was armed with such miraculous power from Heaven, that he did not need any assistance from Empires or States*; Does he think his Arm shortned? or that he now stands in more need of secular assistance, then heretofore? We argue not against the Churches making use of the Authority of Kings, to protect her self against force and violence; or the injuries or oppressions of any, but against Magistrates imposing on her, or on any, in matters of faith and worship; and yet we say, with this Answerer, *That our Blessed Saviour, in erecting his Church, never intended to diminish the Power of Magistracy*; neither hath he, it being the same now it ever was; Magistrates having the same Power now that ordinarily they ever had: nor is there any thing in Christian Religion, but what is, not only consistent, but highly advantageous to Civil States and Societies; in that it teacheth conscientious obedience to Authority, wheresoever, and in whomsoever lodged; and faithfull dealings between man and man.

2 Cor. 10. Though the Church be as he says, a Military, she is still a spiritual Society; the weapons of which warfare are not carnal, but mighty through (the Spirit of) God, (not the Power of the Magistrate) to the pulling down of strong holds; and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. If this

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Answerer can tell us of any other weapons belonging to her, we shall own our obligation to him, for the discovery.

Query XII.

Whether to say the Spiritual Power Christ hath given unto his Church, for the right ordering and governing thereof, is not sufficient unto that end, without the aid and assistance of the Secular Power, be not to blaspheme.

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

WE were promis'd in the last Answer, to be shown in this, what were the weapons of the Churches warfare; but instead thereof, are there told, the end only of Christs giving Power to his Church; which none, sure, ever doubted to be for the edification, not destruction, of the souls of his People: yet we still say, with the Apostle, the weapons of the Churches warfare, are not carnal; That Christ gave gifts, and neither Swords nor Guns unto men, for the perfecting of Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of his Body; and that the Spiritual Power he gave unto his Church, for the right ordering and Governing thereof, is sufficient unto that end. And wherein doth this permit men to renounce the common Christianity, &c. as this Answerer very impertinently objecteth. And 'tis left to the Judgement of all rational men, whether they who insist upon the

the sufficiency of the Spiritual Power, Christ hath given unto his Church, for the right ordering and governing thereof; and the Scriptures being the sole rule of every mans Faith and Obedience, in all Gospel duties and Administrations; or they who allow unto every national or Provincial Church, a Power to Decree Articles of Faith, and compose Forms of Divine worship, to be imposed by civil Magistrates upon Christians; are the more likely to *lead into the Paths of Heresie and Schism; and to destroy the Unity of the Church;* and consequently whether these or those, *do gratifie the old Serpent in his malicious wiles and methods, and give leave to his Instruments to accomplish their Hellish designs, in destroying Christianity, and the Churches Government at one blow:* I say again, let every rational and unprejudiced person, considering the nature and essence of Christianity, and by what ways and methods it hath been corrupted and destroyed, judge.

Gods name is not, indeed, blasphemed as he says, when his Institutions are made use of, to uphold his Truths, &c. But he hath no where Instituted the civil Sword, to force any to the Christian Faith; much less to uphold whatever is taught, or pretended so to be.

And if his name be blasphemed, when mens minds are alienated from the Christian Religion; They will be found guilty thereof, who use such means and methods, for its propagation (as they pretend) as beget an aversion in many towards it, and those that use them. And who

Who is it that would make the profession thereof Arbitrary? They who say, the Spiritual Power Christ hath given unto his Church for the right ordering and governing thereof, is sufficient unto that end, cannot reasonably be said so to do. And wherefore doth he here talk of every beated Brain, and Sulphurous Male-content, being left to serve God, or serve him not; to believe in Christ, or openly to deny and blaspheme him: When all we Pray, and Plead for, is but, *That the word of the Lord may have a free course; and that his name may be glorified,* in the free exercise of all Religious duties; without ever denying it the Magistrates duty, to punish Blasphemy, and the like evils and impieties. But 'twere worth knowing from this Learned and Judicious Answerer, how far any are obliged to *adhere to the Church in which they were Baptized*, that we may not have too hard thoughts of our first Reformers, for forsaking the Church, in which they partook of that Sacrament.

It is, as he says, *One thing to Convert Pagans and Infidels to Christianity, and another thing to keep them within the bounds of their duty, who already profess it:* and yet are both effected by the same means; and the Magistrate can no more compel unto the one, then to the other: But when men give up their names to Christ, 'tis certainly as he says, *the duty of Church-men, to use all lawfull (and proper) means, to prevent their Apostacy from him.* But who are the incorrigible offenders he speaks of? Or what

occasion doth this Query administer, *To ask why the Magistrate may not be requested to save a soul from death, &c.* The Magistrate may certainly be requested to punish sin and wickedness, it being the great end for which God committed the Power of the Sword to him; But he can no more save a Soul from death, and Rescue him out of the snare of the Devil; then he can give grace or faith, which are the gifts of God alone; yet this hinders not, but that Magistrates and Ministers, ought to use all due and lawful means, *To reduce men to Christianity, and prevent their Apostacy from it.*

There is no more need now, then in the primitive Ages of the Church, that its *Acts and Censures*, should be seconded by the *Sword of the Secular Power*: Our Blessed Saviour who is faithful, having promised to be with his Disciples, *Matt. 28. Teaching what he commanded them, to the worlds end.* And that there is so little of Power and efficacy in the *Acts and Censures* of some who would be accounted his Disciples; is not that Christ hath withdrawn any of that ordinary Power he gave unto his Ministers, for the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of his body; but their failure in the condition annexed to his promise in not teaching what he commanded; but setting up their own inventions and devices, in the place of his Institutions; were the Censures of the Church as orderly and regularly pronounc'd now as heretofore; they would have the same effects now as then, upon the Souls and Consciences of believers;

lievers ; what effect they had upon their Bodies,
 we are rather told, then Convinc't of ; for *the*
Incestuous Corinthian's being deliver'd unto Satan ;
 was no more, then (as hath been already said)
 his being cast out of the Church, the Kingdom
 of God, into the World, the Kingdom of the
 Devil : nor were *the deaths of Ananias and Sa-*
phira, with the blindness of Elimas the Sorcerer,
 the effects of any Church Acts or Censures ;
 but of that extraordinary Power Christ confer-
 red on his Apostles, to manifest his Power and
 Authority to the unbelieving world, and to
 say, *it was to supply the defect of the Magistrates*
Coercive Power in the Church ; as if the Churches
 Power were defective, without the Magi-
 strates Sword ; is highly derogatory unto that
 Spiritual Power and Authority, Christ hath
 given unto the Ministers of his Gospel, for
 the ordering and Governing of his Church,
 unto the worlds end 'Tis, as one hath well
 observ'd, *much of Christs glory to rule his Sub-*
jects under the Gospel by a spiritual Power ; 'tis
that Power makes a man a Christian ; 'tis that
Power in all Gospel Institutions, that keeps men in
their due obedience unto Christ ; and 'tis that
Power carries the sting of the punishment, when
men are cast out of the Church : 'Tis indeed, that
Power does all under the Gospel, and to bring in
the Temporal Sword, is to make the weapons of
the Gospel, not mighty through God, but mighty
through the Magistrates Power, and wholly to alter
the nature of the Gospel, and all its Institutions ;
 'Tis to *Arm the Church with weapons* Christ never

gave her; and to make her a Military, rather than a Spiritual Society.

What he says, of *Dissenters being punish'd, for indangering the Peace of the State, by disobeying the Laws of the Church*; shall be spoken to, when he tells us, what Laws, and what Church he here means: Nor can we till then say, *How the Interest of those Societies, are twisted and united*: But do very well know it to have been one of the greatest Artifices in the mystery of Iniquity, so to twist the civil, and some pretended Religious Interests; as to perswade the world, The Oak cannot subsist without the Ivie: but as well Reason as Experience, have evidenc'd the contrary; and that there are no greater Enemies to the Authority, State and Dignity of civil Magistrates then some pretenders to Religion.

Query XIII.

Whether the Carnal conjunction of the Temporal Power with the Spiritual, hath not made all Ecclesiasticall Regiment odious, and unsavory; and serv'd only to enable the Clergy, under the pretence of the Power of the Gospel, to trample, by the Power of the world, mankind under their feet?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THIS Answerer might with as good reason have said, There is no more Spirituality in the Ordinances of the Gospel, then there was

was in the Ordinances under the Law ; *As that there is no more Carnality in the present Union of the civil Power with the Ecclesiasticall ; then there was in the Jewish Church or Commonwealth :* For who, besides himself, is ignorant how God himself United those, making that Church and State but one Commonwealth, over which himself presided ; whereby they became rather a Spiritual, then a Civil Society ; a Theocracy, or a People whom God Govern'd by Princes and Rulers extraordinarily assisted and inspired by him ; or guided and directed by Prophets occasionally sent to declare his mind and will unto them. So that it was God himself that made that Church and State one ; He that was a Member of the State, thereby becoming a Member of the Church likewise. But it is otherwise under the Gospel, the Church and State being now distinct Societies ; and a man may be a Member of the one, without being so of the other : Nor are their concerns otherwise intermixt, then in the Churches enjoying Peace and Protection from the righteous Rule and Government of the State ; and the State prosperity from the Prayers and Blessings of the Church. Those therefore whom God then joyn'd, he hath now sever'd ; and for any other to bring them again together, is, as one very well says, *Presumptuous Fornication.*

The attempt of Core and his complices, he instances in, was undoubtedly a sin in them, as the like would be in any now ; which both Magistrates and Ministers ought to use their sever-

ral Interests and Authorities to prevent, and this Query is far from giving the least countenance or encouragement unto.

Rev. 17. Though the assistance given by Moses to Aaron, did not, as he says, incite him to trample upon the people; yet they who have given their Power and Strength unto the Beast, and his Adherents, have enabled them, under a pretext of the Power of the Gospel, to trample, by the Power of the world, mankind under their feet; to Depose Princes, Subvert States, and Butcher People; and indeed, to make the rest of mankind but their Slaves and Vassals: A truth so well known unto all, who are not willfully blind or wholly ignorant in History, and the transactions of former Ages, wherever the man of sin, and Son of Perdition had Power; it would be time lost to go about to prove it.

Rev. 17. That Ministers are made, as he says, the formal cause of the hatred and contempt of too many Persons; may be both their faults, for, though several Treatises have been lately written to shew the grounds of the contempt of the Clergy, it may be comprehended in two lines.

*Pretending Piety, by some condemn'd,
But more by others, 'cause they but pretend.*

I mean too many of them, which gives a disreputation to the whole, though there are (God be thanked) many Reverend, Learned and Pious Persons of the function deserving double Honour, both for their own, and their workes sake:

sake: and may the number of them be daily increased. But none have cause to be comforted as he says, *That the same fate hath happen'd to others more deserving*; unless they tread in their steps, and suffer on the same account with them: But it is, and may be just cause of satisfaction unto any to be scorn'd and contemn'd by those, whose respect and esteem would be a reproach: *Wo be unto you*, said our Blessed Saviour; *when all men shall speak well of you*, we acknowledge therefore there are those, whose commendations wound, and whose favour is a reflection; and from such, we neither expect, nor desire praise. Luke 6.26.

Query XIV.

Whether to force and compel men in the worship and service of God, to Act against their Light and Judgements, be not a spiritual Rape upon their Consciences?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

IT may possibly, puzzle this Answerer to prove this Query Sceptical, as he terms it, for but implying, that no man ought to be forc't or compell'd in the Worship and Service of God, to do ought against his Light or Judgment; since nothing is more certain, then that no man ought to do or practice any thing therein, which is not of Faith; and why may not such a force then be term'd a Spiritual Rape upon
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on the Conscience? And how hath this *been Answered*, as he says, *in the seventh Query*, where he hath neither prov'd, That any ought to be so forc't against their Judgements; nor yet that any actually were ever so forc't by any of the Kings of *Judah* he instances in: He may do well therefore, as he promises, to *consider it a little more*, and better to, or 'twill be to little purpose. But what means he in saying, *It makes Conscience the ONLY rule of mens Faith and Practices*? For though Conscience (which is the Judgement a man makes of himself and his actions, with reference to the future Judgement of God) be the rule by which all men ought to walk; yet is it a rule that must be rul'd; and 'tis therefore every mans duty, carefully to indeavour his Conscience be rightly inform'd; but to follow it is still his duty. *The plea of an Erronious Conscience*, saith the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Stillingsfleet* takes not off the obligation of following the Dictates of it; for as he is bound to lay it down, supposing it to be Erronious; so he is bound not to go against it, whilst it is not laid down. And says thelike Learned and Reverend Dr. *Ames*, *Conscientia quamvis errans, semper ligat; ita ut ille peccet, qui agit contra Conscientiam, quoniam agit contra voluntatem Dei, quamvis non materialiter & vere, tamen formaliter & interpretive*: For he who does not what he Judges, or believes, God commands or requires of him, would not do it, though God did command or require it.

But

But says this Ingenious and candid Answerer, *The main Argument with which the Libertines of all Ages have shelter'd themselves against the reach of wholesome and good Laws, has been Conscience, and the Internal Liberty of that faculty; which say they, is only and immediatly Subject unto God: It is so; and yet it neither doth, nor ought to, shelter any guilty of sin and wickedness against the reach as he pretends of wholesom and good Laws; for he who sins, ought to suffer for it, whether it be with, or against his Conscience. But says he, A Spirit may be as soon pierced with a Sword, as violence offer'd to the Conscience; or the mind constrain'd to understand, to Fear, Love, Hate, &c. which are Elicite Acts of the soul, and cannot be forc't or violated, by all the compulsive Powers in the world. Does he then conceive Conscience to be concern'd only in thinking? Or in the Acts of the mind? Conscience, certainly, is concern'd in all a mans actions; which none sure who knows what Conscience is, ever yet doubted: He has therefore cause to say, as he doth, All this signifies very little in the present debate; not because as he says,, no Authority ever offer'd violence to the Internal Acts of mens minds; but for that Conscience is concern'd in the External actions of a mans life. Conscience is concern'd in the performance, or non-performance of every duty God commands; and Conscience is violated, when any through dread and fear, are awed or deterr'd from the performance of those duties they judge God requires of them; or provok't or urg'd to do, what they*
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are no less perswaded he dislikes, or prohibits them. But how impertinently are we here told, *When mens opinions are recluded and lock't within their own Breasts, the Magistrate never concerns himself about them*; for how should the Magistrate concern himself about that he neither knows, nor can have any cognizance of? And how ignorantly, if not deceitfully, does he

Rom. 14. here urge that saying of St. Paul, *Hast thou Faith, have it to thyself*; as if the Apostle thereby intended that men should keep their Faith and Opinions to themselves; when he spoke to quite another purpose: For, speaking of meates which some forbore as judging them unlawfull; he advises those who were otherwise perswaded, to forbear their Christian Liberty, when it offended those were not yet convinc'd of the lawfulness of eating thereof: that is, having attained a sure knowledge of the lawfulness of those things, whereof others doubted, they might use their liberty therein, when it gave no offence to their Brethren; so keeping their Faith to themselves, and not using it to the offence or scandal of others, as is evident to whoever reads and considers the context. But none sure, ever affirm'd, the Magistrate was to consult mens private Consciences, and not the honour of God, the safety of his own person and Government, and his peoples benefit and good. *That it may be a greater sin for a man to act according to the Dictates of his Conscience, then to act against them*, as he says, is an assertion I have not before met with: For whatever sin a man com-

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commits acting according, to the Dictates of his Conscience, is at most but a sin of Ignorance, which excuses *à tanto*, though not *à toto*, whereas he that acts against the Dictates of his Conscience, is guilty of willful and presumptuous sinning, which admits of no excuse; yea, is the highest aggravation of sin that can be, and yet has he the confidence to say, This so notoriously false assertion, *is evident, not only from the experience of all Ages; but from the Holy Scriptures*: which says he, *speak of a seared Conscience; of men whose Consciences are defiled, of a Reprobate mind, &c.* But there being men of Reprobate minds, and of seared and defiled Consciences; does not prove, that it may be a greater sin for a man to act according to the Dictates of Conscience, then to act against them. Men of seared Consciences, may be said rather to make no Conscience of what they do; then to act either with, or against their Consciences: For a seared Conscience, is a dead or stupid Conscience; a Conscience without sense or feeling: the like may be said of such as are of a Reprobate mind; and whose Consciences are defiled; nor can there be any greater defilement of Conscience then to act against it.

But what is our Blessed Saviours Prediction of the times coming, wherein some should think they did God service in killing Christians. To this Query: Is it that men of such perverted apprehensions, were to be compelled to worship God otherwise then they are perswaded God

will be worshipped, or how does he apply it?

There are none sure who doubt, but that *the Jewish Sanhedrim* would gladly have slain Peter and John, for Preaching Christ; as, no doubt, would others, who at this day are no less grieved at the Preaching of the Gospel, slay their Successors in the Ministry of the word, did not the good hand and providence of God restrain them. But what is all this to the present Question. *Or what is Paul's pleading Conscience for persecuting Christs Disciples, and making havock of the Church?* These, indeed, prove that there have been, and will be, men of Erronious Consciences: and none sure, ever doubted or questioned, but that the Magistrate may punish men acting according to their Consciences, if what they so do be evil; pretence of Conscience no ways justifying an evil action before men, how far soever an Erronious Conscience may excuse it before God. But what is all this to forcing any to act against their Consciences? And how impertinently is it here askt, *whether it had been to commit a Rape upon St. Paul's Conscience to have punisht him for persecuting Christs Disciples?* As if to punish an evil action voluntarily committed; and to force and compel any to what is evil, were the same thing. Yet, he says, *He knows very well, that it will be here said,* (though he knows not well what himself says) *That a Magistrate may punish for Murder and violating the Laws of the second Table: but the answer to this, he says, is easie; if*

if he should say, that just so our Magistrates do when they Execute any of the penal Laws Statutes upon Dissenters: this, indeed, is easier said, then understood; for what means he by his, just so? What Laws of the 2^d Table are Dissenters, as such, guilty of the violation of? or what Law of God, or Nature, do they therein transgress? I will not say, I know it will be here said, but suppose it may be said, they disobey the commands of lawfull Authority, and therefore ought to be punished: ought then all commands of lawfull Authority to be actually obeyed? I know not what this Answerer may say; but am very confident none who understand themselves will say so: But they may perhaps say, All the lawfull commands of lawfull Authority, ought to be obeyed: They ought so, yet this exception lies against the general Rule, That if the person whose obedience is required, judgeth them unlawfull, though in themselves they may be lawfull, he may not actively obey them. But he proceeds, and tells us, *It is a very strange thing for any to believe, that the Magistrate is invested with a Power to punish men for words and actions tending to the damage of private persons, &c.* But let them speak never so many lyes in the name of God; and Preach and Teach them in Hypocrasie; let them blaspheme God, and Christ, and Religion; then Authority has its hands tyed up; no Coercive Power must be used against any such Criminals; for all those Acts flow from Conscience: It were indeed, a very strange thing if it should be so:

But who tells him that no Coercive Power must be used against those Criminals whose actions flow from Conscience? or who Questions the Magistrates Authority to punish such as blaspheme God, or Christ, or Religion; or that they who speak lyes in the name of God; and Preach and Teach them in Hypocrasie, may not be punisht for it; when prov'd against them? But we still say, That to Execute before Conviction and Judgement, is against all Rules and Forms of Justice, both Divine and Humane; and such a violation of the Law and light of Nature, as no Sober or Judicious Heathen was ever yet guilty off. But the whole of this discourse is grounded on this absurdity, which the Query gives not the least countenance unto; (*viz.*) That none ought to be punisht for what they do according to their Consciences; which no man, sure, in his senses ever affirm'd; every man being to be proceeded against by the Civil Magistrate, according to the Nature and quality of his offence; be it never so much according to his Conscience, if it be that which ought not to be. But he tells us, *every Christian is to act out of a Principle of Conscience in the duties of the second Table, as well as in those of the first; which no man sure, ever doubted off.*

Nor did any rational man, ever say, *That Conscience was a sufficient plea against the Coercive Power of Kings.* The Magistrate may certainly, Enact Penal Laws against Murther, Felony, and the like moral evils; whatever he may do against Infidelity, Schism, Heresie, or errors
in

in Religion; and yet may not force or compel any in the Worship and Service of God to act against their Light and Consciences. The Question here is not, whether the Magistrate may use his Coercive Power to punish for sin; but whether he may compel men to sin; as most certainly they do, who compel them to worship God in any other way or manner, then they are perswaded God will be worship't, and requires of them.

Query XV.

Whether to require conformity in Practice, where there is difference in Judgement, be not to command a man to act against light and Conscience, and consequently to sin?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

TO the Question he proposes, I answer; The Superiour not only may, but ought to take care to act according to the Dictates of his Conscience, as well as the Inferiour to practice according to his: which is yet no answer to this Query; For as it is the Magistrates duty to cause, as much as in him lyes, those under his charge to serve God acceptably; so it is not his duty to command them to serve God in such a way or manner as they judge sinfull, or not according to Gods Institution and appointment. He ought, indeed, to endeavour their Conviction, by all due and just means, whom

whom he Judgeth in any kind to err ; but not to forge them to any thing, in the Worshop and Service of God, against their Judgements ; since, as hath been often inculcated, whatever is not of faith, is sin. But if there be any, who, as he says, *conceive it their duty to serve God in such ways and methods, as are Diametrically contrary to Gods will ; and subversive to the Magistrates Government ;* let them be Impleaded, and punished, after due Conviction and Judgement, but not before.

'Tis not impossible but a Governour may think himself bound in Conscience to command, what an Inferiour may be perswaded he ought not to obey. *The Superiours Conscience being as certain a Rule in commanding, as the Inferiours can be to him in disobeying ;* but, with our Answerers good leave, this is not, as he says, *the case between the King of England, and the present Dissenters from the Church :* His Majesty having sufficiently declared in his late gracious Declaration of Indulgence, that it is not against his Conscience to give liberty to Dissenters. But how slyly would he insinuate here, *That it is against his Coronation Oath so to do ; in that,* he says, *His Majesty swears, That he will defend and preserve to the Clergy, all Canonick Priviledges, &c.* And how this Oath can be performed unless the Clergy have now, the like Priviledge as heretofore, to Burn, Masacre, and Destroy, the faithfull Servants and Disciples of Jesus Christ, and true worshippers of God, under pretence of their being Hereticks and

and Schismatics, may possibly, as he says, be past his Power to conceive and determine. For nothing less, it seems, will satisfy him, *Then all the Canonick Priviledges and Free-Franchises granted to the Clergy, by the glorious St. Edward, and other Kings*: and what they were, may deserve consideration. But, as he very well says, every Prince owes a strict account to God of his Crown and Government; and the Dignity of his place obliges him to promote the happiness of his people; which, certainly, he does not, who permits a Generation of men under the pretext of the Power of the Gospel, to trample by the Power of the world, mankind under their feet; even Princes themselves, where they are able; which if seemly in their eyes, is not so, I hope, in others.

Whether difference in Judgement, will justify any man from Inconformity in Practice? He advises his Reader to consider the strict account Christ called the Angel of the Church in Thyatira to, for suffering that woman Jezabel, to teach and seduce his Servants; and would be resolved, whether the Bishop or Angel might not have excused his own neglects, by pleading for Jezabel; That her Judgement differ'd from his; and to make her practice things quite contrary to her Judgement; was that Christ never did in the days of his flesh: It was an Invasion of the freedom of mens wills, and the Liberty of their Consciences; It was a constraining of them to act against their own Light, and consequently to sin.

Risum

Risum tenacatis Amici? can any forbear laughter at such ridiculous reasonings? is not this Answerer able to distinguish, between commanding to sin; and restraining from sin? Had the Angel of the Church in *Thyatira* been call'd to an account for *Jezabels* non-conformity, such a Plea might have been pertinent; but his Crime was not the making her practice things contrary to her Judgement; which yet to have done might have been a Crime; but the suffering her to Teach and Seduce without controule; without contending for the Truth, and opposing it to her Errors; which would not have been a constraining her to act against her light, but the enlightening her; sound Doctrine diligently and duly taught, being sufficient against Seducers. We had not else heard of many Truths of the Gospel at this day; there being neither in the days of *Jezabel*, nor long after, any Christian Magistrate in the World, to protect or defend them.

What the Reverend Mr. *Perkings* says of restraining error, is nothing to this Query, which opposes only the compelling to sin; yet we would, as much as any that error were restrain'd by such ways and means as Truth might not suffer in the stead of it. And if this Reverend Person judg'd the Commonwealth in his days, did well in making Laws to restrain those who depart from our Church; he did not, I presume, think it did so some years before, when it made Laws to restrain those who departed from the then Church; so preferring the Relation before

before the Rule; making the right and Equity of the Law, to depend on his Judgement or Opinion of Truth and Error in Religion. And if it were his Judgement, as we are told, *That People ought to be compell'd to the Publick Assemblies* (though unsatisfied of the lawfulness of the Service there used) it was an Erronious Judgement, and of very evil consequence; for by the same Rule ought all to be so compell'd by those who have Power on their side, and believe they have Truth also: and what advantage (not to speak of the unreasonableness and unjustifiableness of the thing it self) can any Protestant think Truth and true Religion will get thereby? It were therefore rather to be wished, that all men would observe that no less Divine then Moral precept; *Of doing unto others, as they would be done unto.*

The Query here is not concerning Governours requiring conformity to those things, which the Judgements of Inferiours *dislike or disapprove of, as unmeet or inconvenient*; but to those things (and in the worship of God only) as Inferiours Judge sinfull. The constraining therefore any against their *Wills and Interests, to do what they deny not to be honest and just,* reacheth not the present Question.

Thoughn othing can, as he says, excuse Subjects from yielding obedience to lawful Authority; but the unlawfulness of what that Authority doth injoyne; yet when any one is perswaded the thing commanded is unlawful, though in it self lawful, He may not yield obedience to it; *An innocent*

Dullor.
Dubit. l. i.
cap. 3.
rule 6.

or invincibly erring Conscience, as the Reverend and Learned Bishop Taylor truly tells us, *being to be obeyed against the known commandment of our Superiours.* But a man may lawfully engage upon that action, which he Judges to be unmeet and inconvenient only, not unlawful; though he have some inward averfeness and reluctance in his mind against it, and wishes that no such obligation were laid on him.

But our Answerer does very seasonably recollect himself, in telling us, it will be here said, *That the resolution of this case, does not come home to our present Dissenters; for that they Judge, the commands of Authority about those things which we call indifferent, to be not only inconvenient, but sinfull; and for that reason they deny Conformity in practice.* But where this hath been in part answered, as he says, we have not yet observ'd: and with it may be, (as he promises) considered in the following Queries.

QUERY

Query X VI.

Whether to punish any for not conforming to such Modes and Forms of Worship, as in their Consciences they judge sinfull, be not to punish them for not doing what is acknowledged to be their duty not to do ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THat 'tis all mens duty, as he says, to Obey lawfull Authority, either actively or passively, none sure doubts; but what is that to this Query? To say that active obedience is not required by Authority to all its commands, is to say Authority commands things to be done, which it self judges sinfull and unlawfull, which ought not to be supposed: So that active obedience is by Authority requir'd to all its commands, and nothing can excuse any from such obedience; but the unlawfulness, or supposed unlawfulness, of what is so commanded, But it is neither the duty of a Loyal Subject, nor humble Christian, as he would have it, so to mistrust his own Judgement, as to neglect the exercise thereof, in a due Examination of the lawfulness, or unlawfulness of whatever is commanded him.

But, says this Answerer, To make some nearer approaches to the Query (which is but need) 'tis not Conscience (if that thing be condemned as sinfull) which is not some way or other forbid by

God in the Sacred Scriptures: 'Tis not indeed a right Conscience; but where a man is perswaded that any thing is forbid by God in Sacred Scriptures, though it may not be so, 'tis Conscience in him not to do it, though it be an Erronious Conscience; yet such an one, as till Convinc'd of its Error, he ought not to go against. And his saying, *It may be Humour, or Fancy, or Passion, or Diabolical suggestions, or Foretalements and prejudices imbibed by ill education and instruction, &c.* will never prevail with Prudent and Pious men, to abandon Conscience, or in ought to act against it: nor yet to renounce the exercise of their Judgements in yielding blind Obedience unto any; which were, indeed, not to chuse their Religion, or Act as men; but like Bruits rather, bear whatever shall be imposed on them: So changing their Religion, as oft as chance or providence, shall change their Masters; which, indeed, is very far from a Rational or manly choice.

Whether any can plead Conscience for not conforming to the Establisht worship of the Church of *England*, is no part of this Query; which meddles not with particulars: And yet if no more, as he says, *can be said in the case, Then that he doubts whether he ought to worship God after such a manner, or no*; it may be sufficient to hinder his Conformity, notwithstanding we are told, *It ought not to be of that weight, as to keep him from his lawfull Superiours lawfull command.* For he who doubts of the lawfulness of the worship, may doubt likewise, whether his

his Superiours commanding him so to worship, be a lawfull command ; or whether his Superiour have Authority to command him so to worship ; for where Superiours have no right to command . there lyes no obligation of Conscience on Inferiours to obey ; and then such a command can be no sufficient ground to supersede his doubting ; especially when he is perswaded he hath a plain Prohibition of Scripture against what he is commanded. Neither, as is said, *is it duty, or any part of Christian meekness*, where the doubt is concerning the Superiours Authority, *for any therein to take his resolution, from those claiming that Authority.* And though it be the sin of Dogmatizing, to affirm any thing unlawfull for any to do, which some Law of God, still in force, doth not Prohibit; yet while the Question is, whether there be not a Law of God, now in force, prohibiting the matters in doubt, and which is that which occasions the doubt ? it can be no such sin : So that 'tis not impossible, but both that and the disobedience here talkt of, may still *commence Vertue*, notwithstanding all that hath been here said to the contrary. And yet we deny it not to be every mans duty, in doubtfull matters, to seek satisfaction from those whom God hath appointed to instruct and teach them ; but not to yield blind obedience unto any ; or obey them against the Dictates of their Consciences. And whether this or that particular, commanded by Superiours in the Worship and Service of God ; be agreeable with, or contrary to, the
Law

Rat. ag- Law of God, none may judge for another; *every*
count.p. 7. *mans Reason*, (as the Reverend and Learned
 Dr. Stillingfleet hath truly told us) *proceeding*
according to the rule of Gods word, must therein
be his own Judge.

Query XVII.

Whether it be not the duty of all Christians to walk
together so far as they have attain'd, and in
other things wait the Revelation of the mind of
God to them that differ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

Our Answerer acknowledges, what none
 can reasonably deny, *That every Christian*
is bound to frame and order the course of his life,
according to the measures of his knowledge: And
 he is so in an especial manner, in all the exer-
 cises of Religion, in which none ought to be
 forc't, beyond what God hath been pleased to
 reveal of his mind and will unto them: for
 where any are not convinc't of the lawfulness
 of an action to do it, to them it is sin, though
 the thing it self, may not be unlawfull. Nor
 is every one who is not of his Superiours opini-
 on, to be censur'd by this Answerer, *as will-*
full, in retaining error; or opiniotive in dispi-
sing those who have more knowledge then himself:
 'Tis not impossible but Superiours may err;
 and God approves not of blind obedience, be-
 cause he will not (as the Reverend and Learn-
 ed

ed Bishop Davenant tells us) *hold them excused, Det. Quest. 6.*
who with a blind zeal follow their Leaders.

But who are they, this Answerer terms *weak Christians, and Babes in knowledge?* If such as make Conscience of their ways and actions; and out of fear of offending God, dare not Conform to what they are not convinc'd of the lawfulness of; they are so far from being weak, they will one day appear to be the wisest Christians. *Let us not therefore judge one another, but judge this rather, That no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his Brothers way.* ROM. 14. 13
 And though he tells us, *Babes in knowledge are not fit to be intrusted with their own Conduct and Protection, &c.* there are those Babes to whom God hath revealed those things he hath hid from the Wise and Prudent. What he says of *Children being cack'd and upheld in their humours,* is extremely impertinent here; and nothing to this Query.

But he tells us, *If men would live up to the plain Principles of their Religion: or walk together so far as they have attain'd; They could not possibly conceive it their duty totally to forsake their Parochial Churches; and think it an arbitrary indifferent matter, whether they professed themselves Christians or Infidels.* What he means by totally to forsake their Parochial Churches, I know it: there being those, who, though they cannot communicate with every Parochial Church; nor yet with any Parochial Church, in every thing, are yet ready and willing to communicate with them in all Christian Offices

ces and duties of Religion, separated from those circumstances or Adjuncts of worship of Humane Institution, of whose lawfulness they are not satisfied; who do not therefore totally forsake them; much less think it an Arbitrary indifferent matter, whether they profess themselves Christians or Infidels; though they believe, not all Profession of Christianity to consist in Communicating with Parochial Churches. As for his *Scorners and Infidels Chair*, it might very well have been spared here; neither this, nor any of these *Queries*, giving the least countenance or encouragement unto such; or that any should go unpunisht for the neglect or contempt of Christianity.

An Inferiours differing in Judgement from his Superiour, ought to excite his utmost care and diligence to search and find out the Truth; But will not warrant his yielding blind obedience to any of his Dictates. *Be ye not the*
 1 Cor. 7. *Servants of men*, is a Divine precept, which
 13. must take place in the duties of Religion, or no where. Yet ought not any to Condemn a whole Church, or withdraw from its Communion; but where there are so great corruptions and defects in it, and those too so plain and evident from Scripture, as may justifie both his charge and separation; but of them the party separating must still Judge. *It is the highest Usurpation*, (saith the Reverend and Learned Dr.
 17e. ch. 6. *Stillington*) *to rob men of the Liberty of their*
 p. 118 *Judgements; That which we plead for against the Papists, is, That all men have eyes in their heads,*

heads, as well as the Pope; that every one hath a *Judicium privatæ Discretionis*, which is the Rule of Practice, as to himself; and though we freely allow a Ministerial Power, under Christ, in the Governours of the Church, yet that extends not to an obligation upon men, to go against the Dictates of their Reason and Conscience. "Their Power is only directive and declarative, and in matters of duty can bind no more, then Reason and Evidence brought from Scripture by them doth.

Though in all Ages Christians of different opinions and perswasions, may have Communicated with one another in the Offices of Religion wherein they agreed, (which is but what this Query calls for) yet they never Communicated with one another, (at least ought not so to have done) in those things they judg'd sinfull or superstitious; nor forced each other thereunto. But the Orthodox, the *Arians*, and the *Novatians* might lawfully enough joyn together in Prayer, where their errors were not mixt with their Prayers, and made a part of their worship. And in that Christ and his Apostles, as he says, frequented the publick Assemblies both in the Temple and Synagogues; it is evident, though the worshippers, many of them at least, were guilty of great corruptions and impieties; yet their worship it self was free from them; they could not else have Communicated with them in their worship, and not have Communicated with them in their corruptions and impieties, which were Blasphemous to imagine.

And though our Blessed Saviour Incouraged all due Reverence and Obedience to be paid to publick Laws and Governours, in commanding the
Matt. 23. multitude to do whatever the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses seat, bid them to observe and do; yet it was to be understood, when according to Moses Law; not that they had Power to add to, or diminish from, what God had appointed; or were implicitly to be obeyed: He
Matt. 16. having elsewhere charged his Disciples to Take heed, and beware of the leaven, i. e. Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadduces. So that, though all due Reverence and Obedience be to be paid to publick Laws and Governours; yet is not blind Obedience to be yielded unto either, being inconsistent with those Gospel precepts,
1 Thess. 5. which command us to, Prove all things: To
21. take heed that no man deceive us; and, as hath
Eph. 5. 6. been said, That we be not the Servants of men;
1 Cor. 7. 23. for that every one must give an account of himself
Rom. 14. 12 to God.

When he says, That God hath made sufficient discoveries of his blessed Will to us, in his holy word: What us does he mean? For we cannot but think it all mens duty, (with the Psalmist)
Psal. 119. still to pray, That God would open our eyes, that
18. we may behold wondrous things out of his Law;
 There being an Illumination of the Spirit of God, necessary for the right understanding of those things that are revealed in the word of God; which is, it seems, a revelation this Answerer is yet unacquainted with; for though the Gospel be written, the saving Truths there-
 of

of are hid to those whom the God of this world hath blinded. This Query, therefore, grounded on the Apostles advice to the *Philip-
pians*, intends only the Revelation there men- *Char. 3.*
tioned, which we hope, is no Enthusiasm.

By saying, *In doubts relating to Religion, men would do better to resign up themselves to the Fathers of the Church; and seek satisfaction from the Priests lips, then attend to the Dictates of their own dark minds.* He plainly enough tells what he would be at; and that 'tis blind obedience he would bring us to: But before we thus resign up our selves, both Soul and Body, unto any, let him tell us; who, amongst the many pretenders, are those Fathers of the Church, to whom he would have us thus to resign up our selves; our Blessed Saviour himself having *Matt. 7. 15*
commanded us to *Beware of false Prophets; and 1 Joh. 4. 1.*
the Holy Appostle, *not to believe every Spirit; but to try the Spirits whether they are of God:* By which 'tis evident, there belongs by Divine Right, unto all Christians, notwithstanding *their dark minds*, a private, discretive and self-directive Judgement, by vertue whereof they not only ought to prove all things recommended to them by their Teachers, but even to judge of their Teachers themselves; between the true, and the false; between the Messengers of Christ, and the Messengers of Antichrist. so far is it from the mind of God, that any should pin their Faith upon their Teachers sleeves; Captivate their Judgements unto theirs; and believe and do whatever they shall think meet.

Mal. 2. 8, 9.

It were, indeed, happy, if men could receive satisfaction from the Priests lips, as those which should keep knowledge; But it may be said to too many of them in our days, as the Prophet said to them of old, *Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the Law; ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts: therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the People, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the Law.*

Query XVIII.

Whether in those duties whereon Eternity depends, it be not the highest absurdity, to force any against their own light, to be guided by others who are not infallible?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

TIS no very pleasing employment to have to do with those who either do not, or will not, understand the Questions they take upon them to answer: But 'tis that we must be content with in this Contest.

What this Answerer finds in this Query inferring a necessity of Infallibility in all Guides and Governours, whether Sacred or Civil, we are yet to seek; there being, as we conceive, some difference between being guided in duties of Religion, by those that are fallible, which we never thought unreasonable; and being forced to follow them therein, against a mans own

own light and knowledge, which is the thing here question'd. It being an implicit Faith and blind obedience only, (and even the worst of these, a mans acting against his own light and Conscience) and only in the concerns of Eternity, that this Query opposeth. And where hath this been, as he tells us, *before answer'd?* Or to what purpose doth he here tell us, *It is no higher absurdity in these days of the Gospel, for men (in matters of Religion) to be guided by a Learned and Pious Minister; and much more by all the Governours of a National Church; then it was under the Mosaick Oeconomy, to seek the Law at the Priests mouth, who was the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts; since we never denyed either: but say, that blind obedience was never to be yielded unto any; much less that any ought to be forc'd in any Religious duties, against their own light.* The Priests lips, indeed, should keep knowledge; and they should seek the Law at his mouth; but, as hath been before said, *they departed out of the way; they caused many to stumble at the Law, and corrupted the Covenant of Levi:* So that a Judgement of discretion was then, as well as now, to be exercised by the people, *and they were not always to hearken unto the words of the Prophets that Propheesied unto them;* their directions and instructions therefore, with this Answerers good leave, might sometimes be rejected. And since our Blessed Saviour hath himself commanded us to *Beware of false Prophets;* and the Apostle, *not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits whether they are*

Jer. 23. 16.

are of God, it is undoubtedly the duty of all Christians to examine the Authority and Mission of their Teachers; and to Query who are the true, and who the false; who the Messengers of Christ, who of Antichrist; that so they may receive the one, and reject the other, with all their Doctrines and Instructions; if, upon trial, they square not with the Rule by which they are commanded to prove them. Yet does not this render, as he says, *the Ministry of the Christian Church, (much less all Offices and Dignities of the Commonwealth) void and useless*: It only cautions Christians not to esteem of them above what is meet; in yielding that blind obedience the Gospel Prohibits, and which is unbecoming the nature and being of a Rational Creature to give: when therefore God

Heb. 13. 17 commands the people to *obey those that have the Rule over them; and to submit to them; as they that watch for their Souls*; It is to be understood so far forth only, as they Teach according to the Rule of his word; their Authority, as we have before told you, from the Reverend Dr. Stillingfleet, *Being only directive and declarative; and in matters of duty can bind no farther than Reason and Evidence brought from Scripture by them doth.*

But he goes on with his Infallibility, and says, *the Argument holds as much against any Judge or Magistrate in the civil concerns of Humane life, as against the Ministry of the Church*: But he may be therein mistaken; for 'tis all mens Interest to acquiesce in the Determinati-

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ons of civil Judicatories, in the conceits of Humane life, how Erronious or unjust soever they may apprehend them to be, for the preservation of a greater good ; publick peace and quiet : but that will never make it reasonable, in the concerns of Eternity, which admit of no compensation, for a man to put out his own eyes, to be guided by others ; who perhaps, see no better, it may be not so well as himself. For we do not say, it is absurd for a man to be guided by such as are fallible ; but to be guided by such *against their own Light and Reason*: As for a man to follow one who tells him, He will guide him the next way from *Tork* to *London*; though he leads him still Northward, when he knows the way thither to lye Southward : But could I believe my guide Infallible, I might renounce my own Reason, and disbelieve my very senses, to follow him which way soever he lead me ; but till then shall think it absurd in any to force me so to do ; which is but the genuine import of this Query.

But our Answerer tells us, *A man may act infallibly in his station, though he be not himself infallible* : For he, he says, does so, *who acts and proceeds byⁿ infallible unerring Rule*. Yet with his good leave, he may herein be again mistaken ; For, though the Rule he acts and proceeds by, be streight ; yet if the Agent be not infallible, he may through error or inability draw crooked lines by it ; and so cannot be said to act infallibly : And indeed, if what he here says were true ; instead of one infallible Pope, he hath set

set up Thousands of Infalible Priests, who pretend to Act and proceed by an Infalible unerring Rule; the Infalible and unerring word of God. But to proceed, by what Logick doth he frame an Argument from this Query, against *punishing an Atheist*? Does it say, as he would have it, that none ought to be punisht, *who are not Infalibly convict*? or any thing to that purpose? why then doth he entertain his Readers with these impertinences? Yet hath Truth so far prevailed on him, that he here acknowledges, *All Doctrines ought to be tryed and examined by their proper measures and standards, &c.* But what he means by his *mean between this*, and for men to be allowed a Liberty to deal with their Religion, and the Truths of God, as they do with their Cloathes, which they put on and off, and change as their fancies prompt them; or as the weather or fashion alters, we are yet to learn. For, whether are the more likely to change their Religion, they who use their Reason in the choice and continuance thereof; or they who therein blindly follow the guidance of their Teachers; since the first are as fixt and stedfast therein; as the nature of man, upon the best and surest foundation, is capable off; while the latter, whose Religion depends on the guidance of his Teacher or Leader, is liable to change the one, as oft as he happens to change the other. Yet we do not say, as this Answerer would have us, *That a man ought only to be guided by his own light*; But we do say and affirm, that in the concerns of Eternity, a man ought

ought not to be forc'd, against his own light, to be guided by others, who are not Infallible; and deſire him to prove the contrary.

The inſtances of this Age, which (he ſays,) are innumerable, of thoſe, who ſo ſoon as they ſeparate from their Mother Church, know not where to abide and fix, &c. Are the objections of an elder Mother Church, againſt thoſe who forſake and ſeparate from her: But ſuch as are United unto that Church, which is the Mother of us all, will not be to ſeek where to abide and fix, though ſeparated from all the Mother Churches in the World. They are not the rational and diligent enquirers into the Grounds and Reaſons of their Religion; but the blind followers of their, perhaps, blind guides, that commonly take ſanctuary in Popery.

Query XIX.

Whether at the great day of account, it will excuſe falſe worſhippers to ſay, They therein followed the guidance of thoſe, who pretended to have Authority to Conduct, and Govern them in the duties of Religion? And whether, if the blind lead the blind, they will not both fall into the Ditch?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

WE have not from him the leaſt Answer to this Query; which is no more, then whether falſe worſhippers will, at the great
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day

day of account, be excus'd in following the guidance of those who pretended to have Authority to Conduct and Govern them in the Duties of Religion: But instead thereof, are told, with many unhandsom and undue reflections, *That by false worshippers are meant, either those who serve God according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, or some other Assemblies of Christians: if the former, the Gentleman that proposes it, is extreemly uncharitable; if the latter, the Query is impertinent: But why uncharitable or impertinent? is it so improbable or unreasonable to think there should be false worshippers in any of those Assemblies of Christians who serve God either with, or without the Liturgy of the Church of England? If it be not, the Gentleman may neither be uncharitable, nor the Query impertinent. This Answerer therefore, must either have so good an opinion of all Dissenters from the Church of England, as well as of those who serve God according to her Liturgy, as to esteem it impertinent to doubt of the Truth of their worship; or to enquire concerning the future state and condition of such of them as may be therein misled; or he will approve himself to be the uncharitable person he speaks of; against all Ingenuity and Reason, to apply what was indefinitely spoken to the Church of England, when it is more applicable unto others. And, I shall be bold to tell him in his own Language, It is as great an untruth as ever came from the Father of Lyes, to say that this, or any of these*

these Querics; *obtrude that which is false and slanderous upon any; or that they were chiefly designed for the unwary Country-man: who is not the Person that imposes upon others in things of Divine and Supernatural Revelation; or persecutes any on the account of Religion.* And now, (though it be still nothing to the present Question) he tells us what false-worship is; (*viz.*) *Mens drawing nigh to God with their lips, and putting him far away from their hearts.* And how does this Query charge this upon the Church of England, who is neither said, nor intended in it, to Teach any so to do? and yet there are those of her Communion, who Teach, Preach and Print, *that mens Practices (even in the duties of Religion) whether conformable or not, to their apprehensions, are the Subject of Laws: And that where Truth and Authority draw contrary ways; we are to follow Truth with our Souls, and Authority with our Bodies.* So that with these men, *Divisum Imperium cum Jove Caesar habet.* But I would gladly know of them, or of this Answerer; whether, *what is not of Faith, be not Sin?* Or whether it be not false-worship in any to worship God otherwise then they are perswaded he will, or ought to be worshipt? or whether following the guidance of these, or the like; though they pretend Authority to Conduct and Govern them in the duties of Religion; will, at the last day, excuse those who shall be thus misled by them? and yet we charge not this on the Church of England; nor have we said, *That they who serve*

Indulgence not justified Self 2.

Discut in two Dialogues p. 246.

God according to her Liturgy, were false-
 shippers. These are but the uncharitable In-
 ferences and Surmises, of a strangely ignorant,
 or immeasurably malicious Person; who want-
 ing strength of Reason or Argument, to op-
 pose the Truths he likes not, thus loads them
 with Reproach and Calumny.

And to what purpose does he tell us, it be-
 ing nothing still to this Query, *That there is no
 Congregated Independent Congregation in Eng-
 land; but the respective Pastor of it, assumes to him-
 self more Power and Authority to Govern and Con-
 duct the sworn Members of it, in the ways and
 duties of Religion, than the greatest Prelate in our
 Church does in his Province or Diocese,* unless to
 manifest how difficult it is for him to write one
 true Period, there being amongst them, no such
 sworn Members, as he mentions: and whether
 of them exercise most Power and Authority,
 to Conduct and Govern their respective Mem-
 bers in the ways and duties of Religion, let
 those concern'd determine. *But this,* he says,
*He will not prove from their Practices; the thing
 being apparent from the very Principles of Indepen-
 dency, which aim at little else but Tyranny and
 Pre eminence: as appears by the Independant
 Pastors excluding whom they please from the means
 of Salvation; and making that a condition of
 their Communion, which is impossible.* I hope he
 does not mean here, that in making the condi-
 tions of their Communion impossible, they ex-
 clude whom they please from the means of Sal-
 vation; as if there were no Salvation out of
 their

their Communion; and yet I know not what else he means by it; and if that be his meaning, they do not yet exclude any from the means of Salvation, in making that a condition of their Communion which is impossible; for if the condition were impossible, the Communion which depended on it, would be so too; but the contrary is very well known; and so, in good time, will the credit of this Reporter likewise be.

But as a farther instance of their Tyranny and Præeminence, he tells us, *They pry into the very secrets of mens Souls, Lives and Actions, by severe Scrutinies and Examinations.* If they do, it is not by the Oath, &c. we have heard much talk of. *But they will not, he says, admit of any to be Members of their gather'd Churches, till they have satisfied the curiosity of their guides.* That is, they will perhaps, have no Communion with unbelievers; nor Fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darkness; a great Crime, and worthy this Answerer's rebuke. But, is it more then probable, as he politickly observes, *That this, and not meanness of Trade, impoverishes City and Country;* or, supposing they who having been made partakers of their Spiritual things; should, according to duty, administer unto them in carnal things; How should this occasion the Nations poverty? What do they receive which they give not again? Or which of them hath such plenty, as to enable them to hoard up any thing? No, no; we are told by a wiser and more pious Politician, *That a fruitfull Land*

Rom. 15.
27.

Psal. 107. Land is turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. And the Holy Prophet tells us, The Land mourns, and the Herbs of every field wither, (not for Peoples meeting together, to pray for a blessing upon themselves, their Governours, and the Land of their Nativity, but) for the wickedness (still) of them that dwell therein: thus we see how persons differ in Judgement, according to the diversity of their spirits and passions.

But to return to the Query, charged in the Rear with *blind Leaders and Followers*; he wishes the Gentleman would not make such *fly and unworthy reflections upon the conformable Laity and Clergy of this Kingdom*: And the Gentleman wishes likewise this Answerer would also forbear app'ying to particulars, what is indefinitely spoken, and was not by him intended to one party more than another. But 'tis a shrew'd sign of some very sore place in the Ass that kicks and winches upon every approach, before he is touch't.

QUERY

Query X X.

Whether it be not most unreasonable in the concerns of Eternity, to tie men by Temporal penalties to fallible guides, whom to follow, may be their Eternal, to forsake, their Temporal Ruine ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

HE hath nothing, it seems, to say against it; and therefore very advisedly sends his Reader, he knows not whither; for satisfaction in, he knows not what.

Query X X I.

Whether the main inlet of all the Distractions, Persecutions, and Divisions in the Christian World; hath not been by adding and requiring other conditions of Church-Fellowship and Communion, than Christ, or his Apostles did ?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THe enquiry here is only into the original of the Distractions, Persecutions and Divisions, which have been in the Christian world: *i. e.* among Christians, or such as have made profession of Christianity, not of the Persecutions raised against them by Heathens and Infidels. The Ten Persecutions therefore against the Primitive

mitive Christians, and the Inroads of the *Goths* and *Vandals* into *Italy*, come not within this enquiry. But says this Answerer, *If it be understood in this sense, there are very great mistakes in it; for that severe proceedings of Christian Emperours against Hereticks; and of Hereticks against the Orthodox Christians; were not for Innovations brought into the Church, as conditions of Christian Communion, but for the Truths of Christ, &c.* That's the Query, and wherein ly the great mistakes in asking it? But he may be pardon'd this, for so ingeniously professing himself Ignorant of any Distractions, Persecutions, and Divisions, that were ever raised in the Christian World, upon the account of adding and requiring new or unheard of conditions of Church-Fellowship; unless it were the difference between the Western and Eastern Churches; about the Observation of Easter: So that, it seems, he is ignorant of the Persecutions and Divisions that were amongst Christians, in the Reigns of *Constantine*, *Constantius*, and some following Emperours, upon the imposition of differing, if not contradictory Creeds: For it was not the Doctrine of the Trinity, Three Persons and one God; as exprest in Scripture, that caus'd the breach of Communion and Church-Fellowship, between the *Arians* and the Orthodox Christians; but the Orthodox forcing the *Arians* to subscribe to their newly invented *Homoiousian*; as did afterwards the *Arians*, where they prevailed, requiring the Orthodox to subscribe to their *Homoiousian*: whereas

(as

(as a Learned Prelate hath well observ'd) had both parties acquiesced in the very Scripture exprellions, without their own additions, they might have lived peaceably and quietly together; and the *Arian* Heresie, probably, have soon expired. Error, divested of Secular Force and Support, not being long able to withstand the Power of Truth.

He is, it seems, likewise Ignorant of the great Divisions which after arose in the Church about the Procession of the Holy Ghost; whereas (as the said Learned person likewise observes) had they acquiesced also, in what the Scripture plainly declares, (*viz.*) That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father; and that he is sent by the Father, and also by the Son; but whether he proceeds from the Son, or by the Son, the Scripture being silent, they ought to have been so too as to that Question, and so they had avoyded the unhappy breach which ensued thereon.

But is it possible this Answerer should be Ignorant of the sad Persecutions and Divisions, which have been amongst Christians, upon the account of Rites and Ceremonies, imposed as conditions of Church-Fellowship and Communion, which neither Christ, nor his Apostles ever required. For, not to instance in those between *Austin* and the Monks of *Bangor*, with others we read of in ancient story; what thinks he of the unhappy Breaches and Divisions which have been thereby occasion'd, even in this Church ever since the Reformation: he that

is Ignorant thereof, must be something more than I am here willing to express.

But he tells us *the difference between the Eastern and Western Churches, about the observation of Easter, can by no means be applied to the present case of the Church of England; and those that separate from its Communion.* Nor have I heard of any that ever so apply'd it; and yet for any thing he says to the contrary, it may be applicable enough: For his presuming does not prove, *That every National Church, hath a more indispensible Power over its own Members, (if, as we have Reason to believe, he takes every one for such, who is born or Inhabits within that Nation,) than either the Western Church had over the Eastern, or the Eastern over the Western.* And Secondly, There is no such wide difference as he alledgeth between the conditions of Communion required in the Church of England; and those that were between the Eastern and Western Churches about the Celebration of Easter: For if, as he tells us, *the one was about a trivial inconsiderable business; the other being about indifferent things only, cannot certainly be thought very considerable.*

But, says he, *every Church hath a Power to Guide and Govern its own Members in all indifferent things pertaining to its Communion; which* if true, yet is not every Member bound to believe all things to be indifferent, which their Ecclesiastical Guides or Governours shall call so; and if they require other conditions of said, to be indifferent, *Catholicks no Idolators,* by T. G. p. 33.

Com-

Communion, than their Members shall approve of, or Judge lawfull; 'twill, undoubtedly, cause differences and divisions amongst them.

What Rites the Church of *England* tenders as conditions of Church-Fellowship to those within her Pale, we meddle not with; our Query being only, *Whether the requiring other conditions of Church-Fellowship and Communion then Christ or his Apostles did, have not been the main inlet of all the Distractions, Persecutions and Divisions in the Christian world; which but for asking we are judg'd Criminal; though the Reverend and Learned Dr. Stillingfleet sticks not to affirm, That the main Inlet of all the Di-* *Pres. to him*
stractions, Confusions and Divisions of the Chri- *Irenicon.*
istian world, have been by adding other conditions of Church Communion, then Christ hath done. And hath this Answerer the confidence, or impudence rather, to suppose this Reverend Dr. herein chargeth the Church of England, with all the Distractions and Divisions that now abound in this Nation? or that he causelessly and falsely accuseth a whole Church and Kingdom, as the Fountain of all the Distractions and Divisions that abound in it? or will he not himself be found to be the false accuser he speaks of? The Church of *England* being no more concern'd in this Assertion or Query, then the Church of *Scotland*, or the Church at *Geneva*, or any other Church whatever; unless this Answerer will say, she requires other conditions of Church-Fellowship and Communion, than Christ or his A-

postles did ; which neither the Doctor, nor the Gentleman have yet said,

But to conclude, he tells us, *St. James acquaints us with another cause of Wars and Persecutions then the Imposition of a few Rites and Ceremonies in matters of Religion ; which are from mens Lusts, which war in their Members : But may not the Imposition of those Rites and Ceremonies, proceed from those Lusts, they first rebelling against the Law of their minds, and then against the Law of their Maker ? And whether argues the greater Pride, the imposing upon mens Judgements, or the leaving unto every man that Judgement of discretion God hath given him, and requires the exercise of in all the duties of Religion ; and will not, as the Reverend and Pious Bishop Davenant hath told us, bold those excused, who with a blind zeal follow their Leaders.*

The removing Old Land-marks, with Innocent and usefull constitutions ; is but the old objection of the Papists against the Reformers ; and of them borrowed by this Answerer, to help to fill up his Pamphlet. And though he cannot, as he tells us, forbear mentioning one passage more, it seems to be but to usher in his following Rime ; as a grave and gracious Author has it :

*One verse for Sense, and one for Rime,
Is sufficient for one time.*

Yet are we more beholding to him for this, than for most of his preceding Answers, which have neither Rime, nor Reason, in them.

Query

Query XXII.

Whether Jesus Christ, who came to take away the Yoke, and Burthen of Jewish Ceremonies, appointed by God himself; hath given Power and Authority unto any, to Institute in their room, such others as they shall think good?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

Nothing is more evident in holy writ, than that God will be worship't, but in Lev. 10. 1. the way, and by the means of his own Deut. 4. appointment; and that no Service is accepta- Jer. 7. ble unto him; but what is performed in obe- Mat. 23. 10 dience unto his commands: it may not therefore be unreasonable or unseasonable to ask, *Whether Jesus Christ hath given Power or Authority unto any, to Institute in the Worship and Service of God, such Rites and Ceremonies as they shall think good.* And to this, our Answerer tells us, *The words cited by him from Mr. Hooker, would be a sufficient Answer;* which we deny not, according to his way and method of Answering Queries; otherwise they are far enough from it; for, *though many things which God hath Ordained, have been changed, and that for the better; they have been still changed by himself only, or by Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. And if seven Churches, as he saith, have declar'd, That Ceremonies of humane Institution are Lawfull in the worship of God;* it does not follow

follow, that Christ hath given Power, as he affirms, to some Persons to Institute in the room of the Jewish Ceremonies, such others as they shall think good. And as little to the present Question, is any thing in the words of the Ingenious Gentleman he commends to his Reader. To all which I shall oppose as more pertinent to the matter in Question, the words of the but now mentioned Reverend and Learned Dr. *Stillingsfleet*, who, speaking of the *Meekness, Sweetness, and Gentleness of our Blessed Saviour*, tells us, "His design was to ease men of their former burdens, and not to lay on more. That the duties he required, were no other, but such as were necessary, and withall, Just and Reasonable; That he that came to take away the insupportable Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies, certainly did never intend to gall the necks of his Disciples with another instead of it; (and if so, did not certainly, give Power or Authority unto any to Institute in their room such others as they should think good) "it would be strange, says he, the Church should require more then Christ himself did; and make other conditions of her Communion, then our Saviour did of Discipleship. Then asks, What ground there can be, why Christians should not stand upon the same terms now, which they did in the times of Christ and his Apostles? Whether Religion were not sufficiently guarded and fenced in them? Whether there was ever more true and cordial reverence in the worship of God? What Charter

Christ

Preface to his Iren.

"Christ hath given his Church to bind men up
 "to more then himself hath done? *And then*
 "*tells us,* The grand Commission the Apostles
 "were sent out with, was only to Teach what
 "Christ had commanded them; not the least
 "intimation of any Power given them to impose
 "or require any thing beyond what himself had
 "spoken to them; or they were directed to,
 "by the immediate guidance of the spirit of
 "God. What Power or Commission, there-
 fore, any have since received to Institute such
 Ceremonies in the Worship and Service of
 God, as they shall think good, this Answerer,
 or his Adherents, may do well to inform us.
 But instead thereof, he tells us, *Nothing is more*
evident in the New-Testament, than that Christ
did intrust those whom he appointed in his absence
to be the Ministers of his Church, with the Govern-
ment of it. He did so; and yet he did not
 Empower or Authorise them to Institute in
 the Worship and Service of God such Cere-
 monies as they should think good. But says,
 our Politick Answerer, *This Government could*
not subsist without the Enacting of Laws for its
own, and the Churches preservation, for that
Christ intended, &c. How does that appear?
 we find nothing in his Gospel of any such in-
 tention, nor have we reason to believe he in-
 tended any should Enact other Laws for the
 Government of his Church, than what him-
 self Enacted; since 'twere to deny the Scrip-
 tures sufficiency unto that end; and its being a
 perfect Rule of our Faith and Obedience, in
 all

all Gospel Duties and Administrations; and, in plain terms to tell us, that Christ was not faithful to him that appointed him, as was *Moses*, in all his House, in *that he left not, as did Moses, a compleat Volume of Laws for its Rule and Government.* We wish therefore, this Answerer would acquaint us with the Instrument, by which the Apostles made over their Authority of Enacting Laws, for the Government of the Church, to their Successors; in that it would tend greatly to their conviction, who have hitherto been in an error, and very much deceived, if the Lord Christ be not the sole Lord over, and Law-giver to his Church; and that the Apostles neither did, nor could Delegate a Legislative Power to their Successors; being themselves Ministers only of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the Power of the Keys committed unto them, not being a Power of giving Laws to the Church, but a Power of Teaching and Ruling the Church according to the Laws which Christ himself had given; and those, as he says, *not to that present Age of Christians, but to all Succeeding Ages in which his Church was to continue in the World;* they being every way sufficient to continue and preserve upon Earth, a visible Church untill his Second coming. But so far this Answerer is in the right, *That there could have been no such Society, if there had been no Law for its Unity;* But he should withall have consider'd, that there neither could, nor can, be any Law for its Unity, but from an Universal Law-giver; the obligation of no Law,

Law, extending farther then the ^{jurisdiction} Institution or Authority of the Legislator: So that it is altogether impossible for any but the Lord Christ, to Enact Laws for the visible Unity of Christian Communion, in the external Administration of Gods sacred Worship; since the Jurisdiction or Authority of none other can reach or oblige all Christians.

That our Blessed Saviour was greatly concern'd for the Unity of his Church, none sure, ever doubted. But the words quoted by this Answerer from St. *Johns* Gospel, relate not so much to the external visible Unity of the Church, as to the internal mystical Union that is between Christ and his Members. Yet he tells us, *That which he would principally have the Reader observe in them, is, The care that our Blessed Lord and Master took for that great Essential of Christianity, the Unity of the Church;* No doubt he did, both for the internal and external Unity thereof, and that not only in his frequent calling on his Disciples to Unity, and to love one another; making it a Characteristical note of their relation unto him; *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another;* But also in commanding them to *teach the observation of all things whatsoever he commanded them;* which would all, who would be accounted his Disciples, likewise, observe and do, without *setting up their Posts* (as the Prophet speaks) *by his Posts;* Unity would not be wanting among Christians; nor yet throughout the Christian world, a due uniformity

formity in the external Administration of Gods Sacred worship; which, variety of Rites and Ceremonies in particular Churches, destroys. And it may be truly enough said by him, *That it is impossible for the Gospel to be propagated and upheld by Faith and Charity only; as they are lodg'd in mens Hearts, unless the Fruits of these Graces were exerted in some things that were visible and obvious to sense; and therefore outward worship is required, that the inward may be exercised and expressed; for to talk of inward worship without any outward expressions thereof, is but a Cloak for Atheism.*

But for this Answerer to tell us, *That the Churches Unity was the main thing that Christ took care of, before his Crucifixion; That it is the great Essential of Christianity, the very being of Christian Religion depending on it; And that the main principle of all Christian Amity and affection, is the visible Unity of Christian Communion, in the external Administration of Gods Sacred Worship, which ought to be Uniform and undivided; and then conclude, That variety of Rites in one National Church, would cause Division of Judgement, and of affection; Is such an explanation of the Unity of the Church, and visible Unity of Christian Communion, in the External Administration of Gods Sacred Worship, as, I think, the world was never before blest with; For, was it the Unity of a National Church only that Christ took such care of, and which is the great essential of Christianity? or is it the visible Unity of Christian Communion, in the*
ex-

external Administration of Gods Sacred Worship in a National Church only, that is the main Principle of all Christian Amity and affection? certainly, if variety of Rites in a National Church cause divisions of Judgement, and of affection; variety of Rites in the Universal or Catholick Church, will cause the same also: so that it is a visible Unity of Christian Communion, in the external Administration of Gods Sacred Worship, throughout the Universal or Catholick Church, that is the main principle of all Christian Amity and affection; experience telling us, what sad Divisions, Feuds and Animosities, have, and do daily arise among Christians, from the variety of Rites, in the external Administration of Gods worship, enjoined by particular Churches of several Denominations; even to the destruction of that external, as well as internal Unity, which is the great Essential of Christianity; and which Christ so earnestly recommended to his Church. So that if the Internal Unity of the Church, as well as External Unity of Christian Communion, in the publick Administration of Gods Sacred Worship, be desirable, as most certainly they are, and ought to be: They are no otherwise to be attained, then by all Christian Churches Universally adhering to the Rule of the Gospel; and enjoyning no other Rites or Ceremonies, in the external Administration of the worship of God; and requiring no other conditions of Church-Fellowship, and Communion, then that enjoys and requires.

Nor hath our Answerer more reason to say, *That many Assemblies of Christians, Independent one ~~up~~ of another, though living under the same civil Government, do weaken, and will at last destroy Christianity; Than others, That National and Provincial Churches, rejecting at the Popes Supremacy, destroy the Unity of the Church, and endanger the very being of Christian Religion. Nor yet, That from such small beginnings and Independent Communions, there would have been no more possibility to have spread and propagated Christianity in the world, than an Army divided and scatter'd into Parties, could be able Encounter with another that was United, and observ'd all the Orders of the chief commander; since, as the Apostle tells us, God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and experience hath told us, That from such small beginnings and Independent Communions, Christianity hath been spread and propagated over the world; But if, as he intimates, An Army divided and scatter'd into Parties, is not able to Encounter another that is United, and observes all the Orders of the chief Commander. How will those National and Provincial Reformed Churches, which are but divided and scatter'd Parties of the Christian Army, and Independent one ~~up~~ of another be able to Encounter the Papacy, which is United and observes all the Orders of their chief Commander? So strangely does prejudice and Partiality blind men, as that they see not how they argue against themselves, unless they are of that Army, whose*
 Prin-

1 Cor. I. 27

Principles and Practices they embrace and follow, while they would be thought to skirmish with it. This Answerer may therefore know, if he pleases, That though the Church be compared to an Army, it is not in being like Officer'd, as having a Lieutenant, or Vicar-General, Major-Generals, Colonels, &c. or such like subordination of Officers, depending upon, or centering in one; and yet she is not without her Officers; who, (though at the head but of single Companies) observing all the Orders of their Chief Commander; are, and have been, able to Encounter the United Power of Men and Devils making War against the Lamb and his followers.

But our Answerer, *having explain'd*; as he tells us, *One of the main vitals of Christianity*; (viz.) *The Unity of the Church*; advises his Reader farther to consider, *That in the days of Christs abiding upon Earth, there could not possibly be any Law for the preservation of its Unity, for the reason he mentions; and therefore Jesus Christ gave Power and Authority to his Apostles and their Successors, to Institute such Ceremonies and Rituals in Religion, as they in their own Prudence should judge most agreeable to the manners and Customs of the Nations they should convert; and which tended to promote true Piety and goodness in their hearts and lives.* But for this the Reader is desired likewise to consider, we have but his bare word; he not offering the least proof of any such Power committed by Jesus Christ, to his Apostles, and their Successors;
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the Commission he gave unto his Apostles, being but to teach the observation of such things as he had commanded them; so far was he from leaving it to them (and much less to the prudence of their Successors) to Institute and appoint such Rituals in Religion, as they should think good. These things therefore, are fondly and groundlessly asserted; and no less inconsistent with what himself but now said, than repugnant to the Gospel. For, if those Rites which were agreeable to one sort of People, would not be so unto others; and the Governours of the Church were to appoint, as he says, such Rituals in Religion, as in their prudence they should judge most agreeable to the manners and Customs of those Nations they should convert; what becomes of his main principle of all Christian Amity and Affection, *The visible Unity of Communion in the external Administration of Gods Sacred Worship*; which he but now told us, ought to be uniform and undivided? And it is so far from being impossible that in the days of Christs abode upon Earth, there should be, as he says; any Law made for the preservation of the Churches Unity; that it is altogether impossible, as hath been demonstrated, that any but Jesus Christ, or less then an omnipotent Power, should be able to Enact any such Law. Neither hath our Lord Christ, Instituted any Rite or Ceremony in Religion, but what will very well suit with the Manners and Customs of all Nations. He would never else have commanded his Disciples, to teach all Nations to observe all things whatsoever he commanded

manded them. Yet so fond is our Answerer of his fancies, as to repeat them, in telling us, *That when Christ made void the Law of Ceremonies in the Jewish Church, he intended (though he gives us no evidence of such his intention) to inspire the minds of his Apostles and their Successors, with so much soundness, and integrity of wisdom and understanding; that they should be able by their own Reasons, to Enact such Laws and Orders as should preserve the external Unity of the Church, and render Religion so amiable, as that it should not be quite naked and destitute of all external Ornament and Beauty.* In which he expresses but his own vain and carnal thoughts of Religion; Christian Religion being certainly, most amiable, when most suitable to the simplicity of the Gospel; the beauty of whose worship, consists not in external Rites and Ceremonies, in which, even where they most exceed, it comes far short of the Ceremonies and Ordinances under the Law; and yet the Apostle prefers the Gospel worship, far above that for Glory, Beauty, and Comeliness; which shews that these things have no respect unto outward Rites and Ceremonies. And though he tells us, *It is not in the least repugnant to the wisdom of Christ towards his Church, to invest the Governors of it, with Authority to Institute new Ceremonies in his worship, &c.* Yet the contrary is evident, in that it speaks him either wanting towards it, in not appointing things necessary; or not so wise as others, to find out such things as conduce to its Edification and Beauty. And
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in Commissioning his Disciples to teach only the observation of such things as he commanded them; rejecting the honour given unto him, by those whose worship of him, is taught them by the precepts of men; he sufficiently declares, That no other Rites or Ceremonies but what are ^{of} Divine Institution, are to be enjoyn'd, or made necessary to be observ'd by any, in the Worship and Service of God.

If by positive Laws made for the external Regiment of the Church, the Bishop cited by him, means Laws only for the ordering and disposing of things without the Church; though about it; we have nothing more to say against it, than that it is not the present Question. Nor do we argue from Christ's abrogating those Ceremonies that God himself had appointed; that no others ought to be introduced into the Church. We only ask, *Whether Jesus Christ, who came to take away the Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies appointed by God himself, hath given Power and Authority unto any, to Institute in their room such others as they shall think good.* And are perswaded he hath not; not because he abrogated those, which were appointed by God himself; but because no worship is acceptable unto God, but what is of Faith; *for without Faith,* Heb. 11. 6 *it is impossible to please God;* and Faith in all things respects the commands and Authority of God: So that the Governours of the Church can have no Authority to Institute or Appoint any thing in the Worship and Service of God, either as to matter, or manner, (beyond the orderly

Orderly observance of such circumstances, as necessarily attend such Ordinances, as Christ himself hath Instituted) but by express command or Commission from God. Let this Answerer therefore shew their Authority to Institute new Ceremonies in his Worship; and he may be better thought of, then otherwise, I presume, he will be; by those who fear God, and desire to keep his commandments.

Nor does it in the least reflect upon the wisdom and goodness of God, as he says, *to give unto Civil Powers, Commissions to make such Laws as they please, for securing the Peace and civil Rights of their People; and none unto the Guides of the Church, to make Laws for the preservation of Religion, &c.* But is rather an Argument of his great love and care of his Church, not to leave her to the ordering and disposing of men, which unavoidably (as wofull experience manifests) must fill her with Schisms and Divisions; but to have himself given her a standing Rule or Law, whereby she ought to be Universally Govern'd; and which is every way sufficient, would her Guides and Governours faithfully and diligently attend unto it, *for the preservation of Religion against the Deluges of Heresies and Schisms; and to secure Christians in the Paths, of Piety and Order; of Unity and Peace;* which as hath been shewn, it is altogether impossible for any other Law, or Lawgivers ever to effect.

Nor was it from the dulness and Indocibleness of the Jews, as our Answerer would have it;

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That God gave them Rules for their behaviour in the civil concerns of their lives, and the smallest instances of his worship; But for that he had chosen them, above all the Nations of the Earth, to be a peculiar People unto himself; in whom he would be glorified: therefore Establish'd he a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel. And that he gave them Rules in the smallest instances of his worship, was that he would be worshipt in the way, and by the means only, of his own appointment. But the appearing of Christ, saith this Answerer, Hath abolisht the darknes of mens minds, &c. though but now, to serve another turn, he told us, Mens minds were dark; and they were therefore blindly to resign up themselves, to they knew not whom; such is his dexterity in blowing hot and cold with the same breath; and men are sometimes to be men, and sometimes Bruits, as he hath occasion to serve himself of them. Yet is Life and Immortality brought to light through the Gospel, and Gods Image in a great measure repair'd and restor'd in the soul of man. But of what man? not of the Carnal or unregenerate, but of him that is born again: They are the Saints only and faithfull Brethren in Christ, who are deliver'd from the Power of Darknes; the God of this world still blinding the eyes of those that believe not. And they are the Regenerate only who are endued with the Spirit of Power and Wisdom, of knowledge and a sound mind. But we do not yet find, that even they are empower'd to make Laws for Ceremonies and Rituals

Deut. 14.
Isa. 49.
Psal. 78.

Ans. to the
17. Q.

Col. 1.
12. 13.

Rituals in Religion; or that such Ceremonial Laws, as by some have been made, *have much conduced to common benefit; or conspir'd to the glory of God and mutual good of Christians*: But on the contrary have introduc'd a Theatrical, Pompous, Carnal, worship among the generality of Christians; instead of that spiritual worship which God requires; and without which, no other worship will ever be acceptable unto him, *And he that will look back, as our Answerer advises, To the first Ages of the Church, wherein the Offices of Christian Religion, were adorn'd with that comly simplicity, modest magnificence, and awfull Reverence, &c.* He speaks of; will not find any other Laws, for Rites and Ceremonies in Religion, than the Law of the Gospel, or Canon of the Holy Scriptures.

But our Answerer comes now to his Argument, *à fortiori*, and tells us, *That if it were in the Power of the Primitive guides of the Church, to enjoin Christians the abrogated Ceremonies of the Jewish Law, for the Propagation of the Christian Faith; much more must it be in the Power of their Successors, to Institute others, and so many in their stead, as may conduce to so high and generous an end*: But the abolisht Ceremonies of Moses were observ'd by Christians; and that by the express warrant and command of the Apostles, as in their abstaining from blood, from things strangled, and from things offer'd to Idols. But he not herein mistaken, for these were not commanded as Ceremonies; but prohibited as scandals, to the new Converted Jews. Nor

do we find any Warrant or Command, either exprefs or implicit, of the Apostles, for the Observation of *Easter* : Or that they ever enjoin'd or commanded circumcision ; but we find them declaring *they commanded it not* : And *Act. 16. 24* St. Paul tells the *Galatians*, *If they be circum-*
Gal. 5. 2. *cised, Christ shall profit them nothing.* So far were the Apostles from commanding the Observation of the abrogated Ceremonies of the Jewish Law : which is indeed, a contradiction *interminis* ; for if they had Apostolical warrant and command, they were not abrogated ; but we must bear with small slips, if we will not Create to our selves endless trouble.

But, 'tis at length acknowledg'd, *That Gods will is to be the Rule of his worship* ; and our Answerer hopes to salve all, in saying, *That it were the most sacrilegious Invasion of Gods Prerogative to make humane Inventions the essentials of his worship.* But for Rites and Ceremonies, the Governours of the Church may, it seems, Institute such, and so many, as they shall think good. And if so ; let him tell us why the Church of *Rome* hath not the same Authority, as other Churches, to Institute such Ceremonies, as she also shall think good ? and how comes he to censure her, as *vain and foolish, ridiculous and superstitious* ; while she exercises but the Authority he allows her, Instituting no other Ceremonies, then she judges conducive to, so high and generous an end, as the propagation of the *Christian Faith* ; and which render Religion amiable, by its external Ornaments and Beauty. But what

what may this Answerer mean by the *essentials of worship*? A dear friend of his tells us, *The Eccl. Pali. essence of Religious worship consists in nothing else, ch 3. Sect. 4* but a gratefull sense and temper of mind towards the Divine goodness: and as for all that concerns external worship, 'tis no part of Religion it self; and if this be his Judgement also; he may tell us, 'Tis the most sacrilegious Invasion of Gods Prerogative to make humane Inventions the Essentials of his worship; and yet retain a liberty of introducing all the vain and foolish, ridiculous superstitious Ceremonies now in use in the Roman Church, when ever he shall change his thoughts of them; and judge them to render Religion amiable and beautifull. But certainly, nothing is more evident in Scripture, than that the due observance of the outward Institutions in Religion, come under the notion of the worship of God: So did the Sacrifices of old, and so do the present Sacraments of the Church; which were, and are, parts of outward worship; and I suppose of Religion too: and whatever is made so necessary to be observ'd in the worship of God, that without it, the worship is not to be perform'd, is thereby made an essential of worship; for that which is so the matter of a thing, that without it the thing cannot be, is of the essence of that thing.

But he tells, us, *All that is pleaded, is but that the Church of England, may be allowed the same priviledge, which all Sects and Parties assume to themselves, (viz.) To determine the circumstances of Religion; which is so reasonable, that*
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it cannot either in Reason or Justice be denied. Then he tells us, *There is no Sect, but the Authority of their Teachers prevails in those Instances and Rites, where there is no word of God to warrant the things that are practis'd by them; Instancing in the worship perform'd, as he says, by Independents; asking what Scripture they have to prove their Covenant which the Members of their Churches swear to, before they are admitted by their Pastors and Elders.* Though he finds no mention of any such Covenant sworn to, in the declaration of the Faith and Order owned and Practis'd in their Churches; wherein as well their Order as common Faith is declar'd: Neither of which do they, or did they ever, that I have heard of, impose upon any; and
 1 Pt. 3. 15 yet are able, I presume, to give an Answer unto every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them: To them therefore I shall refer him for farther satisfaction, in the particulars he mentions, if he desires it. And for the present shall only tell him, There is some difference between a confession of Faith, and imposing Articles of Faith; Yea, or Rites and Ceremonies. And will he now say, *In verbo Sacerdotis*, or upon his Reputation, *That the Church of England in appointing of her Rites and Ceremonies, does no more, then appoint circumstances concerning the worship of God, common to humane Actions; which are to be order'd by the light of nature and Christian Prudence, according to the general Rules of the word?* Or why does he thus impose upon his credulous and unwary Reader? But

But he tells us, *If the Governours of the Church of England did command such and such things, then Dissenters had some reason to separate from its Communion*; which is but a copy of his countenance; he elsewhere telling us, *That the Governours of the Church have Power to Institute such Ceremonies as they shall think good; and that it is the peoples duty to obey*; Yea, he advises them to resign up themselves to the Fathers of the Church, rather than attend to ~~to~~ the Dictates of their own dark minds: which takes away, not only the liberty of separating; but even of examining the commands of their Spiritual guides. And having thus reduced them to an implicit Faith, he may be bold to tell them, *There were as many, or more Ceremonies made use of in the very Age of the Apostles, and then Instituted by them, than are now in the Church of England*: and instance in half a score, not one of which were ever Instituted by the Apostles. Yet after all his boldness, he speaks but faintly, in saying, *If he be mistaken in his conjecture about this matter; yet 'tis no way injurious to the present Power of the Church of England, in appointing symbolical or significative Ceremonies in Gods worship: for that the Primitive Christians under the Heathen Emperours, were much like the Israelites in their Egyptian Bondage; rather concern'd to maintain the life and being of Religion, than to be curious about the Apparel and Ornament thereof*. And would to God there were no pretended Christians in these days, more concern'd about the Apparel and Ornament (as they term

term them) of Religion ; then to maintain the life and being thereof. And how unhandsomly does he reflect here on the Primitive Christians, in saying, *When Kings and Emperours became Christian, then they began to glorifie God with their bodies, and to honour him with their substance and Estates, &c.* As if till then, they had been unmindful of the Apostles precept, of glorifying God in their bodies, and in their spirits :
1 Cor. 6. 10 or what thinks he of those who before that,
Acts 24. 6. sold their Possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need ; Did not they as much honour God with their substances and Estates, as those who adorn Temples ? But such gross and carnal thoughts have some, of the most High, *Who dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands* ; as to think him still delighted and pleased, with mens Erecting, Dedicating, and Adorning of Temples ; in which they generally place more of their Religion, than in the performance of the most spiritual and Christian duties, which God requires of them.

QUERY

Query XXIII.

Whether are they who separate, or they who give the cause of separation, the Schismaticks.

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

WE have here a full and satisfactory Answer, In that it is acknowledg'd, *That not they who separate, but they who give just cause of separation, are the Schismaticks.* But then he tells us, St. Paul hath as clearly and fully determin'd this Query, as if it had been proposed in his days: Though you will find him here, as well as elsewhere to handle the word of God deceitfully. For St. Paul in that place speaks only of the duty of Servants; exhorting *those who are under the Yoke, to count their Masters (though Infidels) worthy of all honour*: and not to despise their believing Masters; *because they are Brethren*; but rather do them service, *because they are Faithful and beloved*; and these things he directs Timothy, *to Teach and Exhort*; and then subjoins, *If any man; teach otherwise, &c. He is proud, &c.* Where observe, how instead of Master, he soits in *Superiour*, a word of a more extensive signification; for, though every Master be a Superiour, every Superiour is not a Master: and yet we do not say, that obedience may be withdrawn from Superiours of any kind; Christianity laying the greatest obligation immagi-

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nable upon its Professors, to be obedient to their Superiours. But as the Authority of Superiours is not despotical or absolute, so neither ought the obedience of Inferiours, to be blind or Brutish; both the one and the other being regulated by a Supream Power. For where Superiours have no Right to command, there lyes no obligation on Inferiours to obey: So that whether Conformists, in commanding, or Non-conformists, in not obeying, are the Schismatics; depends on the formers having right and Authority to require; what the latter judges sinful or unlawful to observe; which being beyond the present Question, we shall not meddle with.

But he tells us, *If the Church of England had forsaken the common Faith, it had been no Schism to forsake the Church of England, and if she did so and so; then that command in the Revelation, Come out of her my people, &c. had been applicable to our Dissenters.* But this is still but pretended, being against his principle of blind obedience, and mens resigning up themselves to the Fathers of the Church; without leaving them so much as a Power to Examine what is commanded; for where that is, there must likewise be allowed a dissent in all things they judge evil or unlawful. And though he tells us, *A good Christian ought as much to dread the imposing upon his Judgement an Assent to known errors; and upon his Practice the acting of known Sins, as the suffering the very pains of Hell it self; he does, we doubt, but equivocate, allowing*

allowing none to be known errors, or known sins; but such as Superiours shall judge so: for if he allow Inferiours to judge thereof, and act accordingly; there is no difference between us.

But having told us, what the Church of England does not; he now tells us what many of our Dissenters do: And first, he says, *They Question not only the Power of Bishops to Govern the Church; but that of Kings, to make Laws for the Security of their own Crown and Government, as well as the common Christianity.* If such there are, I am sure no sober or Rational man will justify, or excuse them in it. *That they make the people Judges of their own Pastors, &c.* That they may have reason for; how else can they beware of false Prophets, and try the spirits; as they are commanded; or distinguish between the Ministers of Christ, and the Ministers of Antichrist: But no sober man sure will allow any to withdraw their obedience from those who are lawfully Ordain'd, and ought to superintend over them. *That they forsake their old guides, &c.* This is but the old Popish objection new vamt; nor is such forsaking Criminal, but where causeless: And who are they that renounce in their Assemblies, as he says, *the ancient Creeds which were in all Ages esteemed the Badges of Christianity?* And wherein lyes the Crime of not reading the Scriptures to the people, without expounding them? But sure they make it not indifferent to be of any Communion, who are so great sufferers because they cannot be so.

And if, as he says, *they gather Churches*, not only without, but *against all Authority*, Let him not be thereat troubled since *every Plant which*
 Matt. 15. *our Heavenly Father hath not Planted, shall be root-d up.* Which is due, or undue ordination, will hardly be determin'd till we have an affirmative Answer to the sixth Query. But 'twere happy for the Church of God, if none who are not gifted and qualified for the work of the Ministry; were empower'd to read Sermons in the Pulpit; Prophane the Sacraments, &c. But who are they that as he says, *Evacuate one main Article of the Christian Creed; Faith in one Catholick Church?* besides himself and the Papists? All others, believe *their* is one *Catholick Church*; but do not believe in one *Catholick Church*; we are taught to believe only in God, not in the Church; but he, it seems, hath resign'd up his Faith to the Fathers of the Church; believing only as the Church believes. No wonder therefore he should talk of a *Yearly, Monthly, and Daily Faith*, which his Principles lead him to, if he chance so oft to change his Fathers, or they their Faith. Who they are that go out of their Callings and Stations to Usurp the Office of Bishops, as well as of the Inferiour Clergy, will hardly be determin'd here: Yet I shall tell him what a Reverend and Learned Prelate of the Church of England once answer'd to the like objection; "So long, said he, as they taught the same Doctrine which the Apostles did; they had the same Power and Authority to Preach, which they had: bidding

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 Part 3
 Page 535.

"ing them to keep their competent Jurisdicti-
 "ons, Judicial Cognitions, and legal Decisions
 "to themselves: For that, *as he truly told them,*
 "The Son of God first founded, and still ga-
 "thereth his Church by the mouths of
 "Preachers, not by the Summons of consisto-
 "ries; and he that is sent to Preach, may
 "not hold his Tongue, and tarry, till my
 "Lord the Pope, and his Miter'd Fathers can
 "intend to meet, and list to consent, to the
 "ruine, as they think, of their Dignities and
 "Liberties.

But to return to our Answerer, How do
 they as he says, *break the bonds of Unity, and*
Line of Apostolical Succession, who adhere to
 the Universal and Uniform Law of the Gospel?
 or do not they rather break both, who make
 their own, or other mens wills, the Rule of the
 Churches; and found their Ordination, on un-*obedience;*
 certain tradition.

I know of no Dissenters, *that obtrude Oaths*
and Covenants, as he says, *on their Proselytes*;
 though it be no Crime for Christians to Cove-
 nant to serve God, as God will be serv'd.

Every man hath a Judgement of discretion,
 Which is the Rule of Practice, as to himself;
 and must direct him with whom to joyn, and
 not to joyn, in the performance of all Religi-
 ous duties; nor may he therein do ought against
 his Light. But what means he, in saying here,
They will submit to no Law, nor admit of any Dis-
cipline, but what is erected and Executed by them-
selves, (a thing never known for Criminals to
make

make choice of their own Punishment;) For do they not submit to the Laws of the Land, in all civil things and concerns? and what Law of the Gospel submit they not to in the duties of Religion? but to talk here of Criminals making choice of their own Punishment is very extravagant.

And lastly *they will*, he says, *have no publick Acts pass among them, without the free consent of all, as satisfied in Conscience, that what is decreed, is Gods will.* And is it for this he elsewhere so boldly avers, *There is no Congregated Independent Communion in England, but the respective Pastor of it, assumes to himself more Power and Authority to Govern and Conduct the sworn Members of it, in the ways and duties of Religion, then the greatest Prelate in our Church does in his Province or Diocess?* or is this one of the principles of Independent Tyranny? But some, are said to have need of good memories, and our Answerer seems to be of them. Yet he would be thought to have reason. for what he here says, telling us, *The thing is impossible in nature; for, if all are satisfied, they are not men, there being among all men difference in Judgment.* How unreasonable then is it, to require of any such an Assent or Consent, as must render them either Beasts, or not men? But so it seems, it is and must be; for he tells us, *In the enacting of all Laws, the lesser part is determin'd by the greater:* which is true in all civil things and concerns which are in a man's choice, and at his own disposal; and it

*Ans. to the
19 Query.*

it is for the publick good and benefit, it should be so. But 'tis otherwise in matters of duty and obedience unto God; in which every man ought to be satisfied that what is Decreed, is the will of God; for that none may follow a multitude to do evil; nor in the neglect or omission of the least known duty.

Whether the Church of *England* or Dissenters are the Schismatics, I shall ^{now} take upon me to Determine; but leave it, as he doth to the Rational Reader to judge; and only take leave to say, That what his eminent Prelate says, proves not Dissenters to be Schismatics.

If there be any, who as he says, *account the King and Parliament, or Clergy of England Hereticks and Schismatics, for maintaing the Essentials of Christianity; and doing what they can to binder and diswade men from offering the most insufferable affronts to Gods Being and Majesty;* They ought not certainly to be tolerated, much less countenanced in a Christian Commonwealth.

QUERY

Query XXIV.

Whether they, who in the exercise of Church Discipline, never cease calling on the civil Magistrate, to assist them with his Secular Force, do not therein give an evident sign and token, that all true Ministerial and Spiritual Power is dead in them?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

TH: Question here, is not whether these or those give the greater evidence that all true Ministerial and Spiritual Power is dead in them: But whether such practices in any be not an evident sign and token of it? And had all Orthodox Bishops, in all Ages of the Church, relied upon the Spiritual means by Christ appointed in the Gospel, for the suppressing and rooting out of Heresies and Schisms, without applying themselves to the civil Magistrate for his assistance therein; Christianity possibly, had not suffer'd, as it afterwards did, by Hereticks using the same means, for suppressing of the Faith. And yet we say not, But that *the Clergy may*, and ought to call upon the Civil Magistrate to do his duty in the Protection and Security of Religion; by supporting and defending its Professors in the due exercises thereof, against the violence of wicked and unreasonable men, who have not Faith. Neither do we say, *It is a sign of the Apostasy,*

or

or extinction of the function of Bishops, if they use all due and proper means, to accomplish and bring about lawfull and charitable ends: nor that any end can be more generous and Christian, than to secure People in the performance of their duty to God, to man, and to themselves, But we do say, that Secular Force and Compulsion, are not the proper and due means to effect all these. And whatever sense some may have of Moral Honesty and Justice, or of Piety and Religion; the Civil Magistrate ought not, certainly, to permit them to express or declare, their scorn or contempt of either. I will not say, with this Answerer, *That 'tis since men have assumed so great a liberty in Religion* (as not well understanding what he thereby means,) but agree with him, *There is less regard had to those external Rules of right and wrong; Vertue and Vice; by some persons who make high pretences to Christianity, than hath been observ'd in many Pagan Nations;* but who those Persons are, their Professions and Practices will best declare.

But he tells us, *'Tis Presumption and not Faith, for the Clergy of England (as things are now amongst us) to expect Gods miraculous concurrence with them, in the management and exercise of their Ministerial Office, when there are ordinary means at hand, &c.* What may this Answerer mean here, by *Gods miraculous concurrence with them?* His continual presence, with the assistance of his holy Spirt, he hath promised unto them who observe his commands, unto the worlds end; as the ordinary means to render
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their Ministry effectual, for the Conversion of sinners, and the calling of those who are yet Aliens and Strangers to the Covenant of Grace; And our Blessed Saviour, *when he ascended up on High, gave Gifts unto men, for the perfecting of the Saints; for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.* But if this Answerer, who is of the Clergy, be conscious that things are now so amongst them; that the presence of God, and assistance of his holy Spirit, are to be lookt upon, as miraculous concurrences with them, in the management and exercise of their Ministerial Office; he is to be excused for having recourse unto other means, *to render his labours so considerable, as to make him see some fruits of the Travel of his Soul;* though, possibly, it may prove but bitter fruit in the end.

The Gentleman, I can assure him, never thought, as he intimates, *That the Peoples forsaking of any Assemblies, was a certain Prognostick that the Ministerial Power was quite extinguish'd in all that were so forsaken;* as knowing there are, and may be defects and faults on all sides. But this the Gentleman thinks, That where-ever any People manifest a desire, and thirst after knowledge in the things, and ways of God, (as God be thanked, very many within these Nations, at this day do,) and after trial and experience of the Ministerial Power of any, do yet leave and forsake them, 'tis no very good sign or token of their Ministerial Gifts and Abilities. But it is a presumptuous and too bold com-

comparison he here makes, between the *Success* of *Christs* Ministry, while he exercised it in his own Person upon Earth, and that of the Clergy of England: For, though taking on him the form of a Servant, he was made in the likeness of men; yet cou'd he have Converted Millions of sinners, as well as have commanded Legions of Angels, if it had so pleased him.

The Cases of *Elijah*, and of *Athanasius*, he instances in, are not at all to the present purpose; for we do not say, that Peoples leaving or forsaking their Pastors, is an Argument of their having lost all spiritual Power and Authority. But Pastors leaving or forsaking the spiritual means by Christ appointed for the Rule and Government of his Church; and applying to, and using of other means, than he appointed and commanded them; to the subversion and ruine of his Discipline, is an Argument of it. And here I cannot but take notice of the great Pique our Answerer hath against liberty in Religion, in that he would have the Prophets apprehension, *That the whole Israel of God had forsaken his Covenant, to proceed from the general indulgence granted by Ahab, to all kinds of Religion, as well as Impieties*; when, though there may be reason enough to believe he indulg'd all kind of Impieties, in that it is said, *He did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, then all the Kings of Israel that were before him*; there is not the least evidence of his indulging all Kings of Religions; in that, though there were 7000 who

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16. 33.

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had not bowed the knee to *Bal*; the Prophet knew not of one true worshipper besides himself; which is no great Argument of *their being indulged*, among the all kind of Religions, he talks of.

But to conclude, *whoever*, as he says, *shall seriously consider the depraved Nature of Man; how much more prone it is to embrace Vice, than Vertue; Error than Truth; and the Novel, rather than the good old way of Religion*; will not be much startled or wonder that the greatest part of mankind, should forsake the Truth and true Religion, which have Persecution and outward sufferings usually accompanying them; to embrace those Religions, which not only indulge them in their Lusts, but have the greatest worldly Interests and advantages attending them.

Job 16.33

2Tim. 3.18

Query X X V,

Whether are not they Strangers to the Power and efficacy of the Divine Spirit, or distrustfull of Gods Providence, to be always with his Church; who think Christianity, which both began and spread it self over the world for several hundreds of years, under Heathen and Persecuting Emperours, cannot stand or continue supported by the same Divine Presence and Protection to the Worlds end, without the Aid and Assistance of the Civil Magistrate?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

WE do not say, nor did we ever think, the first Reformers of Religion in this, or any other Nation, were Strangers to the Power and Efficacy of the Divine Spirit, or distrustful of Gods Promise to be always with his Church; Because the whole Reformation was not without the Aid and Assistance of civil Magistrates: But bless God rather for their Cooperating in so good a work. And yet we shall not scruple to say; They had been strangers to the Power and Efficacy of the Divine Spirit, and its operations on the Souls of men; had they believed the Reformation could not have been effected without them. And to ask what Archbishop Cranmer, Hooper, Ridly. &c. could have done to restore Religion to its Purity and Truth; had they not been seconded and Assisted by the civil Magistrate would have

have better become a *Turkish* Mufti, then a Gospel Minister. Does he think the Power and Efficacy of Gods Spirit, in the mouths of his Preachers, not sufficient to convert the most obstinate; *and to bring into Captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?* How then did, not only Peter and Paul, with the rest of the Apostles; but the Primitive Christians for several Ages after them, propagate Christianity, and the Truths of the Gospel; not only without the assistance, but even against the greatest opposition of civil Magistrates? And what can be more to the disparagement of the then *English* Clergy; and derogatory to the Spirit of God, then to say as he does, *they might as well have attempted to have pull'd the Sun out of its Orb, as ever to have Reformed Religion, (by the Aid and Assistance of the Holy Spirit) without the Aid and Assistance of the civil Magistrate.* Does he think things were then amongst them, as he would have them thought to be amongst us, That the Presence of God, and Assistance of his Holy Spirit, were to be look't upon as *miraculous concurrences* with the Clergy in the management and Exercise of their Ministerial Office? I trust they are not; and that he judges both of the one, and of the other; but by himself. But so far I agree with him, *That as Kingdoms, and States, so Religion and the Church are to be secured and upheld, by the very same means and methods, by which they were established:* And so the Church of England, as *founded in Prelacy by the Kings and Nobles of*
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England, as hath been shewn, must be secured and upheld by the same means and methods; or it will not long so continue, but as Christian, wherein it was founded by the mouths of Preachers with the Aid and Assistance of the Holy Spirit, it will, I trust, be so secured and upheld to the worlds end: Yet that God will withal vouchsafe her, so great a blessing, *That Kings and Queens may ever be her Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mothers*, to protect and defend her from the rage and violence of wicked and unreasonable men, since all men have not Faith, is my hearty desire.

But our Clergy man (sensible, it seems, *how things are now amongst them*) is distrustful of Gods continuing his Church with us; and therefore would have the Gentleman consider, in what Scripture he hath promis'd, that either Christianity in general, or Protestantism in particular, should for ever continue the Establish'd Religion of this Kingdom. We know, indeed, of no particular promise concerning the Establish'd Religion of this Kingdom; but this we know, *That where two or three are gathered together in Christs name, he hath promised to be in the midst of them*; and that he told his Disciples, while they taught the observation of all things which he commanded them, *he would be with them to the worlds end*; So that if Christianity continue not with us, it is by our own default, in forsaking Christ, and disobeying his commands.

He is pleas'd to acknowledge here, what could not well be denied, *That Christianity*
Spread

Spread it self over the world, under Heathen and Persecuting Emperours, only by the Power of the Divine Presence and Protection, without the Aid of the civil Magistrate: But looks upon it as miraculous, and not to be depended on; and would not, because some have been fed from Heaven, without the help of ordinary and common sustenance, that others, therefore, should refuse their daily bread. No certainly, no wise or sober man will ever do that, but rather thankfully accept of the Magistrates favour and assistance, if he will have that to be the Churches daily bread; though I should have thought, the Divine presence and Influences of the Holy Spirit, might rather have been so esteemed; and to substitute in the place thereof, the Magistrates Coercive and Compulsive Power, favours more of Mahumetism, than of Christianity. And so little reverence hath he for our Blessed Saviour, as to tell us, with a seeming contempt of him; That true Religion flourish'd before ever he came in the flesh; though he acknowledges, it was by the Divine Protection without the Aid of the civil Magistrate: But so soon as the Israelites were settl'd in the Land of Promise, The true Religion he says, no longer thriv'd and prosper'd, among them; then it was encouraged and protected against all false and Forraign Religions, by the civil Magistrate: God having then, as he would have us to believe, withdrawn his Divine and Spiritual Assistances from it; committing the sole care and concerns thereof to the civil Magistrate. What then became of Religion when those

those Magistrates neglected their duty both towards it, and towards God? was there then no true Religion in *Israel*? or does he think it did not then thrive or prosper in the hearts of any, which is the proper Seat of Religion? The Apostle tells us, *Godliness is great gain*; but gain with some is the only godliness; and they think Religion never thrives or prospers, but in the outward Prosperity of its Professors; though the contrary be evident, and so David tells us, *Before I was afflicted, saith he, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*: and again; *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy Statutes.* Yet will it not be denied, but that the example and countenance of Superiours, hath a great influence on the behaviour and conversation of Inferiours, according to the old saying, *Regis ad exemplum, totus componitur orbis*: yet Religion does not stand and fall with them, for even in *Abahs* Reign, there were 7000 who bowed not the knee to *Baal*: who yet were neither Schismatics, nor to be censur'd as disobedient to Superiours, because they were not of the then establish'd national Religion.

But to conclude, our Answerer tells us in plain terms, *Although Christianity were planted by miracles, (i. e. By the Power of the Divine Presence, and its Protection only, without the aid of the civil Magistrate) yet its preservation can be effected by no other means than Laws*: forgetting what he but now told us, *That as Kingdoms and States, so Religion and*

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The Church, are to be secured and upheld, by the very same means and methods by which they were acquired. But Mahometanism prevailing, hath, it seems, alter'd his mind, and now he judges the Sword of the Spirit, unable to preserve Christianity, without the aid of the Civil Sword; and that Christ's promised Presence with his Church to the worlds end; together with the Gifts he gave unto men, for the perfecting of the Saints; for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of his body; are not of themselves sufficient for the preservation of Christianity. Yea, he sticks not to tell us, That these have slept for these fifteen hundred years; (judging it seems, of others, as things are now amongst us, such as himself) and consequently that Christ continu'd not his Gifts unto men for the ends before-mention'd, nor yet his Presence for the preservation of his Church above one hundred and fifty years; so leaving her for an hundred and odd years, without either Civil or Spiritual means for her Preservation; it being 300 years after Christ, before she had the Aid or Protection of the Civil Magistrate: such an excellent Advocate for Christ and his Church, hath this Learned and Judicious Answerer approv'd himself.

QUERY

Query XXVI.

Whether to Persecute upon the account of Religion, be not an Indication of a Cainish, Ishmalitish, and Wolfish Nature; and a certain sign, that such are none of Christs Sheep?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

THIS Answerer is sure the first that ever quarrel'd at the severities of any expressions, against such as persecuted on the account of Religion; there being certainly no viler miscreants on the Earth, than they who molest or trouble any for rendring only unto God, the Homage due from the Creature to the Creator. And though he knows of none of the Socinian writers, that press, as he says, this Argument with that bitterness as is expressed in the Query. Yet he may soon find some among the Orthodox, who have prest it in the same words; and from whom indeed, the Query was but borrowed.

The Reverend, Learned and Pious Dr. Henry More of Cambridge, having declared Liberty of ^{Myft of} Godliness, Religion to be the common and Natural right of all ^{Lib 2 c 10.} Nations and Persons, tells us how Groſſious gives ^{Sect 48.} P. 521. several instances thereof in his De jure belli & Pacis: where he cites one of the Canons of the Council of Toledo; Præcipit Sancta Synodus, &c. The Holy Synod Decrees that none hereafter shall by Force be compelled to the Faith, for God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and

whom he will be hardneth. Also Tertullian, *lex nova non se vindicat ultore gladio*: The Gospel supports not it self by the punishing Sword. He Cites also the constitutions of *Clement*, *Athanasius*, and *Chrysostom* to the same purpose; who expressly exclude Force and Compulsion in bringing over to Christianity. And certainly they who are brought over to it, ought not therefore to be treated with less of Reason and Moderation.

That also, saith our Reverend and Learned Doctor, is remarkable which Bishop Jewel notes out of Chrysostom, in the 19th Homily on St. Matthew, *Nunquid ovis lupum persequitur aliquando, &c. Does the Sheep ever persecute the Wolf? no, but the Wolf the Sheep*: so Cain persecuted Abel, not Abel Cain: so Ishmael persecuted Isaac, not Isaac Ishmael: so the Jews persecuted Christ, not Christ the Jews: Hereticks persecute Christians, not Christians Hereticks; by their fruits therefore ye shall know them: whereby he plainly implies, that Persecution for Conscience sake, is A very Unchristian or Antichristian Symptom. And smartly again in the same Homily, *Quem vides in sanguine persecutionis gaudere, lupus est*, He that is a Persecutor, is no Sheep of Christ, but a Wolf. And lastly (for it were an infinite business, saith he, to prosecute this common place) that is a shrewd intimation of the Apostle, he that was after the flesh, persecuted him that was after the Spirit; so great an Antipathy is there between the carnal and truly Regenerate Christian; which should make
any

any man afraid to feel any persecuting motions arise in his breast; as being Indications of a Cainist, Ishmaelitish, and Wolvish Nature; and a certain sign that such are none of Christs Sheep. These are the bitter expressions which our sweet-natur'd, and tender-hearted Answerer, hath not met with among his Socinian acquaintance; and which his meek and gentle Spirit cannot bear against his Brethren.

But the Reverend and Pious Dr. More far-Myst. of
 ther tells us, *That the cruel and bloody Persecution* ^{Iniq. l. 2.}
of the true and living Members of the Kingdom of ^{c. 15. pag. 166.}
Christ; for their faithful adhering to the plain
and undoubted commands of their Heavenly So-
veraign, who is stiled King of Kings, and Lord
of Lords, is certainly the most signal and capital
Antichristianism that any Policy can be corrupted
with; and the most grossly and visibly opposite,
both to the nature of Christianity, which beareth all
things, and endureth all things; which will not
be ever severe to the wicked, much less cruel to the
good. And also to the description of Christs Go- ^{p/al. 72.}
vernment; who is said, to redeem the Souls of ^{1/a. 40.}
the needy from deceit and violence; and that their
blood is precious in his sight: he shall feed his
Flock like a Shepherd; he shall gather his Lambs
with his Arms, and carry them in his bosom. This
is the genuine Spirit of the true Christian Pastors,
whether of higher or lower degree, to be thus ten-
derly affected towards their Sheep. But such as
thwack and beat them, and violently drive them;
instead of going before them in a way of Christian
example, these are not Shepherds, but Butchers;
 and

and will easily drive them to the Shambles, and see their throats cut without remorse.

This being the genuine Spirit, as he truly says, of the true Christian Pastors; to be thus tenderly affected towards their Sheep; what shall we judge of those, who not only thwack and beat; and violently drive them: but are so tenderly affected towards their Persecutors, they cannot bear their being hardly spoken of? And how impertinent are we here told (while inquiring only after the nature of those, who persecute upon the account of Religion) of *the enacting Laws to punish those that violate and deflower Religion; as if to persecute for Religion, and punish the Violaters of Religion, were the same thing. We dissuade not, as he insinuates, inflicting punishments upon sensual and unrighteous Persons, such as violate the Laws of either Table; and are far from thinking Christian Justice and Righteousness, inconsistent with Clemency and Lenity, of Spirit. Yet is it neither just nor righteous to Execute before Judgement. And as our Blessed Saviour is stiled the Shepherd of Souls; and as he says, That Title imports, that he would have not only his Lambs and Sheep fed, but grievous Wolves watch, and their mouths stop'd too, when they devour the flock, and teach things which they ought not for filthy Lucre's sake; It becomes a duty to stop his mouth, who endeavours what he can, that Christs flock should be devoured; teaching notorious untruths, and things which he ought not for filthy Lucre's sake. Nor will it, I doubt, advantage him, That*

as Christ is a meek Saviour to returning sinners; so he is a terrible Judge to Apostates and evil doers, while he continues a Persecutor, since against such, as himself hath told us, His Arrows are ordain'd. And though, as he says, he begins to Execute vengeance in this world, by raising up men of undaunted Spirits, who make Righteousness the girdle of their Loins, and Judgement their Robe and Diadem; to succour his Church, support his Worship and punish his Enemies; yet such will never persecute for Religion; nor think those to give ill example unto others, or to become Schismatical and disorderly in their Stations, who serve God according to the rule and order of the Gospel; nor judge any evil Doers, for rendring unto him the Homage due from the Creature to the Creator; seeing by this no occasion is given to the Enemy to reproach and blaspheme the good ways of God; whatever occasion some Cainish or Ishmalitish spirits may thence take so to do. But for such as have erred and strayed from the flock of Christ, or neglect the Christian duties he requires of them; let the Magistrate, in Gods name, and by the ways and means of his appointment, reduce or otherwise punish them; no good Christian will certainly ever be displeased thereat.

But, says our Answerer, 'Tis no indication of any such nature as the Query mentions to punish evil Doers; It is not indeed, nor does the Query say it is: but to persecute on the account of Religion, as Cain persecuted Abel, Ishmael, Isaac, &c. and as their followers at this day persecute
such

~~But~~ such as are more righteous than themselves, is
 an Indication of such a nature as the Query
 mentions. And now if Magistrates will not
 do as he would have them, *He declares them*
wickedly unjust, and all those terrible Epithetes
mentioned in the Query to be ascribed to them
 what then is it he would have them to do? *To*
break the Jaw-bone of the tricked, and pluck the
spoils out of their teeth. So would every honest and
 good man. *To repay men according to their deeds,*
fury to his Adversaries, and recompence to his
Enemies; and who desires not the same? *to im-*
ploy their Power for his honour from whom it de-
scends; nothing sure is more just. Not to permit
the Christian Faith to be torn in pieces, by a thou-
sand Sects and Factions, and Wolves to prey upon
Christ's flock. This above all, is, indeed, their
 duty; and 'twere to be wished they would care-
 fully observe it, and not suffer; much less assist,
 any to impose their thoughts or fancies in the
Agenda and Credenda of the Gospel upon o-
 thers: but permit the Scriptures to be the Sole
 Rule of all men's Faith and Obedience, in all
 Gospel Duties and Administrations: Nothing
 being more evident than that particular
 Churches or Persons, assuming to themselves
 a Power to Decree Articles of Faith, and im-
 pose them upon others, is that which hath
torn the Christian Faith in pieces, and divided the
Church into Sects and Factions; and which gives
opportunity unto Wolves to prey upon Christ's flock;
and to the great Enemy of mankind and his wicked
Instruments to sport themselves in her ruine, cor-
 rupting

rupting the worship of God with their additions, and bringing scorn and contempt upon all the Offices of Christianity, and the whole Ministry thereof. Let all men, saith the Learned and Judicious Mr. Chillingworth, Believe the Scrip. *Pres. to the* ture, and that only; and endeavour to believe it *Author of* in the true sense, and require no more of others; *cha. Main.* and they shall find this not only a better, but the only means to suppress Heresies, and restore Unity: For he that believes the Scripture sincerely, and endeavours to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be an Heretick, And if no more than this were required of any man, to make him capable of the Churches Communion. then all men so qualified, though they were different in opinion, yet notwithstanding any such difference, must be of necessity one in Communion.

And if, as he says, To tolerate unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers, who vent their idle fancies to corrupt and withdraw others from the simplicity of the Truth; be an Indication of more cruelty, than to Tollerate so many Thieves and Murderers upon publick Roades and Highways; This Answerer is by no means to be tollerated, having manifested himself, so unruly and vain a Talker, and Deceiver, as he hath done,

Query XXVII.

Whether can any think, That they who Persecute Christ in his Members, despoiling them of their goods, and Imprisoning their Persons; and that too, for their faithful adhering to the plain and undoubted commands of their Heavenly Sovereign; will speed better at the great day of account, than those whom Christ himself hath told us, shall be then rejected, but for not visiting and relieving his poor Members, when in want, in sickness, or any other Adversity?

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

INstead of Answering this Query, 'Tis very judiciously objected, *It hath many things questionable in it.* And with as great Judgement, and to as little purpose; he likewise tells us, *That none are true Members of Christ, besides those that are United to his Church; for that Christ is the Head, and his Church his Body; and (as he also judiciously observes) no one can be a Member belonging to the Head, unless he be some way or other United to the Body.* But sure, our Answerer is the first pretended Christian, that ever questioned the soundness of Christs Body, the Holy Catholick Church; or that a Christians jayning to it might endanger his internal Union to Christ who is H^ed. And wherefore doth he here tell us, what the Query neither denies, nor questions; *That the Church of England, is*

a sound part of the Catholick Church; unless to manifest his Dialectick Art, in proving, *That whoever, (in any thing) withdraw themselves from any part of Christs Body, cut themselves off from Christ the Head; and therefore they who withdraw Communion from the Church of England, (though but in the least minute Circumstances or Ceremonies) belong not unto Christ.* So that, it seems, with this Learned and Judicious Answerer, out of the Ceremonial Pale of the Church of England, there is no Salvation: and if any are punished for so cutting themselves off from Christ the Head, their punishment is no persecution: Quod erat demonstrandum.

Great wits according to the Proverb, have short memories; he could not else have so soon forgotten, which he but now reprov'd the Independants for, (*viz.*) *Their evaluating one main Article of the Christian Creed; Faith in one Catholick Church:* For that, as he said, *They restrained it to themselves,* whereas he so restrains it to the Church of England, as that he allows of none *withdrawing themselves from her Communion, to belong unto Christ.* the one main Article therefore of his Christian Creed, *Faith in one Catholick Church;* is, it seems, *Faith in the Church of England, (or rather Faith in whatever Church is uppermost.)* And though out of her there is no Salvation; yet, for Arguments sake, he will suppose, *That those who separate from her Communion (even in her very Ceremonies) are notwithstanding (such) their*
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separation, real Members of Christs mystical body; yet none of them, he says, are persecuted for their faithful adhering unto Christ, or the undoubted and plain commands of their Heavenly Sovereign: nor does the Query say they are. But supposing, as he supposeth, That any should be punished for assembling together to Pray, or partake of the Ordinances of the Gospel, which Christ hath Instituted, and requires the observation of; would not such be persecuted, for their faithful adhering unto Christ; and to the plain and undoubted commands of their Heavenly Sovereign?

But says our Answerer, Let the Gentleman produce one Person that ever suffer'd for performing any essential duty of Christian Religion. We know not what he may esteem an essential duty of Christian Religion; who is one with him, Eccl. Pol. P. 99. who declares the outward worship of God, to be no part of Religion. But if he will allow Praying, Preaching, and Administering the Sacraments, to be essential duties of the Christian Religion; as by all good Christians they have hitherto been esteemed. He need not go beyond his own Parish to meet with those, who have suffer'd, and deeply suffer'd, even by his Intigation, for the performance of those duties.

But he tells us, 'Tis not for the performance of those duties, but for the disorderly and Irregular way of performing them, that they are punished. Very good: By what Rule then does he judge the way of their performance Disorderly and Irregular;

Irregular; all order consisting in the due observation of some Rule: Now if he will tell us of any Rule they therein transgress, which he will abide by; he hath said something to the purpose. He tells us, indeed, *They are punished for not doing them in that due manner, as is enjoyn'd them by their Superiours*; yet does not say, The injunction of Superiours, is the Rule whereby they are to be perform'd. Nay, he *Ans. to the* says, *If the Governours of the Church did command a worship that were Idolatrous or superstitious; or did appoint vain, foolish, and ridiculous Ceremonies; they were not therein to be complied with.* *Query.* So that the Injunctions or Commands of Superiours, are not, by his own confession, this Rule. But he tells us, *They are punished for being disorderly in their Stations and Callings, and for being disobedient to Government and Laws.* If by being disorderly in their Stations and Callings, he means, as he elsewhere says, *Their Usurping the Office of Bishops, as well as of the Inferiour Clergy*: He hath thereon, already had the Judgement of as Learned and Judicious a Divine, as most the Church of England can boast of. And for their being disobedient; though he hath advised us to resign up our selves unto the Fathers of the Church; He hath not yet told us, they are to be obeyed in whatever they shall, or may, command us. So that neither can the commands of Governours, nor Laws of Superiours, be this Rule; nor indeed, ought else but the will of God, revealed in his word: *To the Law, and to the Testimony, was the old Rule;*

Rule; and the Divine Institution is still the only Rule, to judge of the Orderly and Disorderly performance of all Religious duties; by; and if the manner of their performance be not according unto this Rule; it is, indeed, Disorderly and Irregular; and suffering upon that account, may be esteemed a punishment, rather than a persecution; as may likewise their sufferings, who are *disobedient to the Laws and Governments* of men, in all civil and secular matters and concerns; and theirs also, who *censure the Actions of Authority; Usurp the Office of the Ministry; endanger the peace of the State, and violate the Unity of the Church.* Nor are there greater violaters of the Churches Unity; than they who impose on Christs Disciples, o- ther conditions of Church-fellowship and Communion, than Christ or his Apostles, ever enjoined or required. And so far I agree with this Answerer, *That the not punishing of these, is prejudicial both to Church and State; the one being thereby ever-run with Factions and Seditions; and the other, (as wofull experience tells us,) with Schisms, Heresies and Contentions.*

But our Answerer grows pleasant, and plays with his Reader, in telling him, *Dissenters are persecuted to, what the Primitive Christians were persecuted from, (viz.) Their Churches, or Publick place of Divine worship;* for Dissenters are, not certainly, persecuted to their Churches; though some may account it a persecution to be compelled unto his.

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There hath been, and may be, great difference in the Causes, as well as Degrees, of Persecution; but whoever suffers in any kind for his faithful adhering unto the plain and undoubted Commands of his Heavenly Sovereign; the Author thereof, will not be excus'd; because others have been more barbarous and cruel than they. And yet, that even these are not as bad as the worst; may be ascribed rather to the good hand and providence of God; and moderation of those in Authority, restraining them, than to their good wills or desires.

The instance he gives us, of a *Father's correcting his child, and the child's crying out Mother*; is very impertinent here. Parents may correct their children, and Princes their Subjects; but as the cause makes the Martyr, so 'tis that must denominate it either persecution or punishment. 'Tis Christ alone knows who are his; yet thus much we shall presume to say; *That they who persecute him in his Members, will not speed better at the great day of account, than they whom himself hath told us, shall be then rejected, but for not visiting and relieving his poor Members, when in want, in sickness or in any other adversity.* Matt. 25.

QUERY

Query X XVIII

Whether, since offences will come, it be not every ones concern, to be more than ordinary careful, he involves not himself in that dreadful woe, pronounced against those by whom they come?
 Matt. 18. 7.

Reply to the Answer to this Query.

Quoting the Text, might have satisfied this Answerer, That by offences here, no more is understood, then what our Blessed Saviour intended when he pronounc't that dreadful wo against those by whom they come: and whether they be the persecutions which discourage Christians from owning of his name; attending upon his Ordinances; adhering unto his Truth; or ought else that administers occasion to another to transgress any Law of God; neglect his duty, or obstruct him in a course of Piety and good works; it certainly concerns every one to be more than ordinarily careful, he involves not himself in that dreadfull wo, pronounced against those by whom they come. The Query, indeed, cautions all to beware splitting on so dangerous a Rock; but chargeth none with running, or driving others, upon it. Evil therefore be to him that evil thinks.

Mr. Baxter, as quoted by him, says very well, *That a Minister should not more fear offending his particular flock, than offending the Catholick*

holick Church; but this will neither justifie, nor excuse his offending of either. And notwithstanding this Answerer's hope, he will not find a National Church of humane Institution, to have that Authority over its Members, (even when it shall be determin'd who are so) as a private Minister hath over the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him Overseer. Whether Dissenters take no offence, as he says, but what they bring upon themselves by their own perverted Judgements, &c. Let them see too, who are therein concern'd; and must one day answer for it.

There is no doubt, but it may, and often does so happen, That one man is the occasion of another mans sin; and yet the guilt of him who sins, not to be charged upon him, whose action occasion'd it; which yet hinders not, but that many may likewise occasion others to sin, for which they must be accountable. And yet none sure doubts, but that, as he says, in the enacting of Laws, Authority is not so much to consider, what will please the bawours, as advance the benefit of those under its Charge and Protection: Nor can we have so hard thoughts of any in Authority, as to imagine they should make Laws

thwart or contradict those that are Divine: Nor yet who takes or gives offences; for as every one must give an account of himself to God; so let every one look to himself, and his own duty. And as (he tells us) the day is coming, when all mens Disguises and Vizards shall be pull'd off, and their most retired thoughts and actions laid

*th designe & purpose
to entreat & comfort
of Inferiours much
Rom. 14. Let shall
11. we take upon us
to determine what
humane laws*

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open and manifest to men and Angels; so 'twere well if all men had a serious and due sense thereof; and so liv'd and behav'd themselves in the whole course of their lives, as to convince the world, they spoke as they thought, and believ'd as they profess.

But who are they this Libellous Answerer accuses of *charging the Church of England with offences; and denying the Magistrates Power and Supremacy in matters of Religion*; as by Law declared? These Queries being no ways guilty thereof; for, as they respect, so they were directed only to such as himself; who against the Doctrine of the Church of England, and Principles of the Reformation, require an Implicit Faith, and worse than blind obedience from the People: And 'tis beyond his Power and malice, to find any thing in them, inconsistent with their receiving the Holy Eucharist according to Law; who scruple not the lawfulness thereof. And who are they this Libeller would have to *Question, not only the Kings Coercive Authority, but the whole Ministry and being of the Church of England, and accuse her Government of more Tyranny and Persecution, then ever yet was objected against her, by the most violent of her Romish Adversaries*? Not those sure, who are against secular Force and Compulsion in Religion; which is the utmost import of these Queries; for then the charge will reach all those Reverend and Learned Divines of the Church of England before mention'd; with most others of Name and Fame in the Christian World, who

who have decry'd the same as Unscriptural, and Inconsistent with the Precepts of the Gospel, and Principles of Christianity; and will, indeed, argue him to be *the Person of that evil and depraved temper of spirit* he speaks of. Yet I agree with him, *That men Eminent in their Country, and such as have a reputation for Knowledge and Wisdom, might do more good by their examples; than in this Age, the Church can do with its censures, or Church-men with their instructions.* But let him be assured, none shall ever have a Reputation for Wisdom and Knowledge, who give not unto God, the things that are Gods; as unto *Cesar*, things that are *Cesars*; *Fear to whom Fear; and Honour to whom Honour is due.* And let him not deceive himself in thinking *Men of Wisdom and Knowledge separate from the Church*, because they separate from some Churchmen of vicious and depraved spirits; or to have *Enmity against that*, because they will have no Fellowship or Communion with these: it not being their duty to follow any, farther then they are followers of Christ; Christians being obliged to walk together, so far only as they have attain'd. To require more of any; is, indeed, (as the Apostle at large declares in his 14 chapter to the *Romans*) to lay a *stumbling-block in the way of their Christian Brethren*; and infallibly to involve those that so do, in that *dreadfull wo* pronounc't by our Blessed Saviour in the Text cited.

But has this Answerer the vanity to think, his Illogical and undue Inferences; false suggestions,

gestions, Impertinent and Ridiculous Reasonings; and nonsensical Answers, should convince any of *guilt*? yet if he know of any who are fallen from their first works; or otherwise wanting in their duty; let him not spare to charge and charge them home; and if they cannot acquit themselves; let not reproach and shame only befall them; but whatever severity Law and Justice can inflict, upon them.

'Tis very much, That notwithstanding all, so Learned and Judicious a Person hath written in the Churches vindication; any should yet reply, the Ecclesiastical Laws and Constitutions do little or no good; and therefore were better, for the reasons mention'd, to be repeal'd: against which, besides what he hath already said; He adds the saying of a Roman, when Rome, as he says, resembled England by the ill Government of Galba; That it is far better to live where nothing is lawful, then where all things are lawful; which is such a reflection on the Government, as these Queries, with all their Sedition, shall, I hope, never be found guilty of. But what may be the instance of ill Government which is here so severely reflected on? it will, upon inquiry, be found to be no other; Than His Majesties late gracious Declaration of Indulgence to Dissenters in Religion; the which, though it secur'd to the Church all its Rights Priviledges, and Emoluments, was yet so intolerable to some Church-men; in restraining them only from, falling upon and ruining their poor, peaceable and pious Neighbours, that none have more,
and

and few, I think, so much reflected on Authority, as some of them have thereon done; an evident demonstration what Loyal and Faithfull Subjects they would quickly be, should Authority deal with them, as it hath done with some others: for who would not be Loyal, to kind and bountiful Masters? Wolves and Tygers are so to those who feed and favour them: But they only are to be accounted Loyal Subjects, who are so for Conscience sake; to severe and froward Governours; as well as to the kind and courteous; and not as their Benefactors, but as Gods Ministers; which is a Loyalty, few of these Loyalists can boast of.

But he again tells us, *The Scripture compares the Church to an Army*, which it does, for terrors; but not for being alike Officer'd: *And for an Army*, says he, *to be left to its own Liberty; and every common Souldier to observe no Order, nor live under any Discipline, is the ready way to expose it as a prey to the first Invader*; It is so indeed; who is it, therefore that would have no common Souldier, observe any Order, nor live under any Discipline? Not they certainly, who would have both the Officers and Souldiers of this Army, to observe all the Orders of the Chief Commander; the Officers in commanding, as well as Souldiers in obeying, which will be found to be the Order and Discipline, that ought to be observ'd.

But this Answerer tells us, *The little good that is done by the Laws of this Church and Kingdom, proceeds either from the want of their due Execu-*

Execution (which is still a reflection on the Government; as is, his elsewhere saying, *The vigorous Execution of one Law, would do more good than a Million of Proclamations, &c.*) or from the indisposition of those Persons, who expect Protection from Laws, without paying any Reverence or Obedience to them, &c. 'Twas never denied, but that in Civil and Secular Affairs and Concerns, Force and Compulsion, is and must be us'd; or there can be no Rule or Government amongst men: But in the Concerns of Religion, abstracted from secular Interests and advantages, it is otherwise; men are therein to be gain'd and Govern'd, by perswasion and conviction only; Religion cannot be impos'd; nor is any thing more absur'd, than to endeavour to promote the Truths of the Gospel, contrary to the Laws of the Gospel; *Virga Regum*, as *Rupertus* truly tells us, *Est virga Dominationis; virga Discipulorum Christi, virga est Dilectionis*: or as *Hieron* hath it *Rex præest nolentibus, Episcopus volentibus*. And the Apostle tells us, *There is a way of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*; But the weapons whereby that Victory is atcheived are not Carnal; which is, indeed, the cause of the little good that is therein done by Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws. This Answerer may therefore very well ask, *What effect Ecclesiastical Laws can have upon Atheists and Infidels*; all the Ecclesiastical Laws in the world, Seconded and Assisted by the Laws of the State; not being able to Convince or Convert one Atheist or Infidel;

fidel: Hypocrites, or dissembling Professors, they
 may, indeed make, but can never make one
 true or sincere Christian: Penal Laws, there-
 fore, concerning Religion, have ever respected
 more the Civil Peace and Interests of Kingdoms
 and Commonwealths, (That under pretence of
 Religion, the Rights of Princes, and Liberty
 of the People, be not invaded or injur'd) then
 the Truths of the Gospel, which are not by
 those means or Methods, to be preserved or
 propagated. So a late great Minister of State,
 speaking of penal Laws against Papists, tells
 them; *'Tis not against their Opinions of Purga-
 tory or Transubstantiation, though errors; but
 against their owning the personal Authority of the
 Pope, within His Majesties Dominions, as danger-
 ous to the State, that those Laws are provided,
 disclaiming therefore of that, they should find them-
 selves at great ease.* And it was the great busi-
 ness of the Chief Ministers of State in Queen Eli-
 zabeths Reign, to satisfie the world, that none
 ever suffer'd in England for Religion, but for
 Treason or Treasonable practices, under colour
 or pretence of Religion. Nor can we believe
 some late Laws concerning Religion were ever
 intended to molest or punish any for the perfor-
 mance of any truly Religious duty; but of such
 only as under pretence thereof, met to con-
 trive Insurrections and Rebellions; and there-
 by became dangerous to the State; and such cer-
 tainly, of all men, ought to be the most se-
 verely dealt with, as well for their Hypocrisie,
 and abuse of Religion, as for such their disloyal
 practices:

*E. of Clar.
 Anim. on
 the Resp. 10.
 11.*

*As appears
 by the seve-
 ral Treati-
 ses written
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 purpose by
 their Or-
 der.*

practices : For none, sure, can imagine His Majesty would ever have indulg'd Dissenters the Exercise of their Religion, had it been against that the Laws had provided, and not rather against the danger that might from some meetings have accrued to the publick ; the preservation of the publick peace, being the ground both of those Laws, and likewise of His Majesties Declaration of indulgence, upon the difference of times, and circumstances of Affairs ; as is evident from the p^rambles of those Statutes ; and His Majesties gracious Answer of the 24th of *February* 1672, to the Petition and Address of the House of Commons, as, followeth,

C. R.

His Majesty hath received an Address from you, which he hath seriously consider'd of, and returneth you this Answer, That he is much troubled, That that Declaration, which he put out for ends so necessary to the *Quiet* of the Kingdom ; and especially in that conjuncture ; should have proved the cause of disquiet to the House of Commons ; and have given occasion to question his Power in Ecclesiasticks ; which he finds not done in the Reign of any of his Ancestors. And he is sure he never had thoughts of using it otherwise, than as it has been intrusted in him to the *Peace* and establishment of the Church of *England*, and to the ease of all his Subjects in general. Neither doth he pretend to the right of suspending Laws wherein the Properties, Rights, or Liberties of

of his Subjects are concerned ; nor to alter any thing in the Established Doctrine or Discipline of the Church of England.

The only design of this was, to take off the penalties the Statutes inflicted upon Dissenters; and which he believes, when well consider'd of you, *Your selves would not wish Executed according to the Rigour and Letter of the Law.*

Neither hath he done this with thought of avoiding or precluding the advice of his Parliament. And if any Bill shall be offer'd him which shall appear more proper to attain the aforesaid ends, and secure the Peace of the Church and Kingdom, when tender'd in due manner to him, he will shew how ready he will be to concur in all wayes, that shall appear good for the Kingdom.

How expressive of Royal goodness, and Heavenly Benignity and Compassion towards mankind, is this gracious Answer; which cannot but endear His Majesty unto all sober and Pious Persons, of what Judgement or persuasion soever in Religion. Nor were the Commons against the Indulgence, but the way and manner of it; in that they immediately upon this p^{re}sent Bill of ease for Protestant Dissenters, which was sent up to the Lords; But the differences that after happen'd between the two Houses about Jurisdiction and Priviledge, with other greater Affairs of State, hath hitherto obstructed its farther progress.

But to return to our Answerer, who tells us, *That to repeal the Churches Laws, would*

administer too just an occasion to the Papists, to triumph in the ruine of it: for what Truth or Being, saith he, could that Church pretend to, That had neither Ephod nor Traphim; no Order, no Law, no Liturgy, no Bishop, no Discipline.

It seems then, in his Judgement, all these in the Church of England depend wholly upon the Ecclesiastical Laws; although the Primitive Church, in, and after, the Apostles time, had both Order, Law, Discipline, Bishops or Overseers, without other Laws, than what were Divine, or of Apostolical Institution: Though

Chap. 2. 5.

I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your Order, &c. saith the Apostle to the Colossians. And is not the good word of God, a Law to all Believers?

Ezek. 7.
26.

But this Law, it seems, is perished from our Priest: who yet, we hope, will not deny the Holy Ghost a Power, without the aid of Ecclesiastical Laws, of making Bishops or Overseers, over the Churches of Christs Institution; and such, certainly, are not without Discipline; nor deprived of Law, Order, or Overseers; nor consequently of Truth or Being; upon the repeal of Ecclesiastical, or the Churches Laws. Yea, God forbid, the Christian Church should depend upon the continuance or alteration of these or those Civil or Ecclesiastical Laws; which we see chang'd and alter'd, as oft almost, as we change our Governours. which is, indeed, a consideration that ought seriously to be thought on, by all the lovers of Religion; and who have any regard or concern, for the Truths of

of the Gospel, and purity of Christs Institutions.

But says this Answerer, we have now unanswerable Arguments to justify our departure from Rome, but if all our Laws and constitutions be laid aside and abrogated; we should be just like the Israelites, when they waged War with the Philistines; in the day of Battle, there was neither Sword nor Spear found in the hand of any of the People.

If then our Laws and Constitutions; be our only unanswerable Arguments to justify our departure from Rome, and our only Swords and Spears, to fight against those Adversaries; an abrogation or change of those Laws, and Constitutions would, indeed, disarm, and silence us; and might as well justify our return to Rome, as now our departure from it: But I trust, though this be *Ratio ultima*, the best Arms and Argument, of our Answerer; we have yet other Arms and Arguments to justify our departure from Rome; and fight against those Philistines.

But he now tells us, 'Tis none of his business or intention, to exasperate any mans Spirit, much less to direct his Governours, &c. Yet he admonishes them to stand up in a zealous vindication of their own Liberty and Power; and to provoke them to it, upbraides them with Cowardize if they do it not; telling them, It is there needed thereof, that encourages men in their Separations; Disobedience and provokes God to deprive them

Power and Authority, with which he entrusts them, and which they have betrayed and exposed to scorn and insolence of his and their greatest Enemies. Yea, tells them, Histories are not barren of instances, how God hath revealed his wrath from Heaven against those Governours, and deprived them of the Honour of being his Deputies, when their Spirits have been softened with sensuality and ease, and they have lived in fear of their Inferiours, who ought to live in fear of them. Which is such a menace of, and reflection on Authority, and our Governours; as none but this Bold and Insolent Answerer, would ever have dar'd to publish. He does well, therefore, to recollect himself, and tell us, He has proceeded too far on this Argument; which indeed, speaks him a Person so highly impudent and immeasurably malicious, that (as himself hath elsewhere said) he is fitter to receive a confutation from the penalties of Laws, and the Sentence of a Judge, than from the Strength of Reason or Argument.

But he concludes in the words of, indeed, a truly wise and Learned Statesman; *That Heresies and Scisms are of all others the greatest scandals; yea, more than corruption of manners, &c. which being so, all just and lawful means ought, certainly, to be used; not only for their Suppression, but prevention; in removing the Causes of them; of which, there is not a greater, than the Authority by some ascribed to the Church, yea to particular Churches, Church-censures imposing upon Christians in the observance, of the Gospel; which is,*
indeed,

indeed, as that Learned and Judicious Statesman says, *A wound or solution of continuity, destructive of the Churches Unity; dividing her into as many Sects or Parties, as there are particular Churches, or Societies of Churchmen, assuming such Authority in the Christian world.*

I shall therefore conclude the whole in the words of a Learned and Judicious Son of the

Church of England; who, in vindicating his Friend for not taking on him that Authority *Chil. safe way to Sal. Part. 1. ch. 4.* his Adversary would have had him, That

is, for not playing the Pope, thus expresses himself: Certainly saith he, *If Protestants be faulty in this matter, it is for doing it too much,*

and not too little. This presumptions imposing of the senses of men, upon the words of God; the special senses of men, upon the general words of God;

and laying them upon mens Consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and Damnation;

This vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the words of God: This

deifying our own Interpretations, and Tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that Latitude and generality,

and the understandings of men from that Liberty, wherein Christ and the Apostles left them; is, and

hath been, the only Fountain of all the Schisms in the Church, and that which makes them immortal; the common Incendiary of Christendom, and

that which tears in pieces, not the Coat, but the Bowells and Members of Christ. Ridente Turcâ,

nec dolente Judæo. Take away these walls of Separation, and all will be one: Take away this

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Persecuting, Burning, Cursing, Damning of men, for not subscribing to the words of men, as the words of God; require of Christians, only to believe Christ, and to call no man Master but him only; let those leave claiming Infallibility, that have no Title to it; and let those that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions: In a word, take away Tyranny, which is the Devils Instrument to support Errors, Superstitions and Impieties, in the several parts of the world; which could not otherwise long withstand the Power of Truth; I say take away Tyranny and restore Christians to their just and full Liberty of captivating their understandings to Scripture only; and as Rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the Ocean; so it may well be hoped, by Gods blessing, that Universal Liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth and Unity.

F I N I S.



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